Task Force on the Education of Maryland's African-American Males

Give me a chance.
I'm here because I want to be successful.
Maybe you can relate to me—maybe not.
But give me a chance.
You'll see I'm just like everyone else.

Eye-to-Eye: The Power of Personal Invitations to Learning

December 2006

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We are especially grateful to the African-American boys and young men whose deeply felt dreams and disappointments are the heart of this report. We hope we have recounted your beliefs accurately, rendered your appeals persuasively, and justified your faith in us.

We dedicate this report to you.

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Note from the Chairs

O n June 9, 2003, the Task Force on the Education of Maryland's African-American Males was convened by the Maryland K–16 Leadership Council (chaired by the University System of Maryland Chancellor William E. Kirwan, former Maryland Acting Secretary of Higher Education John A. Sabatini, Jr., and Maryland State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick) to evaluate Maryland's progress in addressing persistent academic achievement problems imperiling African-American boys and men.

Certainly, we don't believe that underachievement is contained to African-American males. Certainly, we don't believe they're the only ones needing focused academic help. However, this was the challenge issued by the Governor's Commission on Black Males more than a dozen years ago, and this was the charge issued by the K–16 Leadership Council—one we adhered to strictly. We hope the work of this Task Force spurs the formation of others and that other groups of students at risk of academic failure get the attention and support they deserve.

Task Force membership was diverse. College presidents and superintendents worked alongside inner-city volunteers and advocates. Some members had advanced degrees; others had none. This diversity in background and perspective was key to our mission and profoundly shaped our report.

We were asked to evaluate the successes and failures of Maryland's public schools with regard to African-American males' school readiness; reading, math, and science achievement; attendance, graduation, suspension, and expulsion rates; participation in advanced academic programs; and college and career preparation. The Task Force did, indeed, address these topics. But because many found it difficult to sever what they consider the inextricable connection between a child's emotional well-being and his academic success, many topics are substantially influenced by the social context in which they occur.

In cataloguing ways to improve the education of African-American boys and men, we were asked to ensure that the practices recommended are scientifically based and supported by solid research, and to comment explicitly on the kind of community involvement and human and financial resources needed to fulfill this mission.

While we indicated the agencies and organizations shouldering primary responsibility for each recommendation, we did not cost each out. For the Task Force felt strongly that we were charged with outlining not what is expedient—but what is necessary—to level the playing field for African-American males.

All Task Force members—without exception—felt that school, itself, is an at-risk environment for African-American male youth, and they wanted this report to justify fixing it—whatever the cost. It's up to all of us now to figure out the financial implications of these recommendations, what we can afford and what we can't, where creativity can compensate for a lack of funds, and when the cost of doing the right thing is simply the burden we have to bear.

Dunbar Brooks
Co-Chair

Orlan M. Johnson
Co-Chair

Executive Summary

T here is a great deal of evidence to demonstrate that all children are not valued equally, that some children are clearly valued more than other children, and finally, that African-American male children are valued least of all. It is not likely that schools, as they are currently structured, will ever look on the majority of children they serve as having unlimited potential.

<div align="right">—Governor's Commission on Black Males</div>

More than 10 years after the Governor's Commission on Black Males, chaired by then-Delegate Elijah E. Cummings, issued its report—with plenty of indictments like the one above—the Task Force on the Education of Maryland's African-American Males finds many of the same problems catalogued by the Commission unresolved.

That does not mean they've been unaddressed. Some of the recommendations in this report have been made before—and some, repeatedly—but they were, for whatever reason, ignored or abandoned. However, the fact remains they're fair—and just. They need policies attached to make them actionable and accountability to make them enforceable. They need the backing of the political leadership and a clear, unequivocal promise from each state agency as to how it will help fix this problem of inequity and inadequacy. These recommendations need an independent group to monitor our progress and to hold our feet to the fire if we fail to make it.

For the African-American male is still imperiled. And while he is ultimately responsible for his own learning, many of the young men we talked to said it's not that they don't respond to education; it's that they don't respond to what passes for it.

We acknowledge that, at every level, there's been a fundamental failure on behalf of our African-American male students and a persistent bias against them. These recommendations are intended to rectify both.

Recommendations

Skilled, culturally competent teachers

Place the most effective teachers in the highest need classrooms and place the most effective principals in the highest need schools.

African-American male students will never catch up to their peers if we continue to staff poor, majority-minority schools with the least qualified, least experienced teachers and administrators. This Task Force isn't the first to cite research showing that teacher quality predicts academic success better than anything else, nor is it the first to recommend more equitable staff distribution. But instead of a cogent placement policy, we've gone only so far as to offer incentives to teachers and principals in the hope that they'll voluntarily accomplish this end. The incentives haven't worked. So it's time that local school systems and the teachers' unions together: a) draft a placement policy that will get their best teachers and principals into the schools that need them the most; and b) outline the support teachers will be provided to make them want to stay there.

The color line divides us still.

<div align="right">—W.E.B. Du Bois</div>

Recruit African-American men into teaching.
Black males make up 19 percent of Maryland's public school population, but less than 5 percent of its teaching force. Some of the students we talked to said that seeing African-American men in the classroom would make up for their troubling lack in the home. Others said that while a Black man would relate to them better than other teachers and maybe care about them more, he would also be tough with them in a way that many White women—and to a lesser degree Black women—aren't. The Task Force recommends three strategies for getting African-American men into the classroom: 1) Develop a teacher preparation program that allows African-American men to work as paraprofessionals and progress toward full teaching certification. 2) Promote the Associate of Arts in Teaching program to attract African-American men into the profession. 3) Convene private organizations to furnish incentives for African-American men to pursue teaching.

Include in teacher preparation programs cultural competency training, especially as it re-lates to African-American males, and make teachers demonstrate effectiveness in this area.
Given the overwhelming homogeneity of Maryland's teaching force and the increasing diversity of its student body, it's unsurprising that socio-cultural conflicts occur. It's also unsurprising that these conflicts breed bias, miscommunication, low expectations, low motivation, and ineffective teaching. If we continue producing teachers who look dramatically different than the students they teach, we must prepare them professionally and emotionally for these differences. Colleges of education should train prospective teachers in MSDE's cultural competency standards, and MSDE should hold teachers accountable for meeting them. MSDE should also use the Social Studies Task Force, convened in 2004, to advocate for poor, minority, and urban children in terms of a culturally relevant curriculum and culturally competent teachers.

High standards and academic opportunity

Stop the over-identification of African-American males for special education and draft a plan for exiting students from it.
In special-education categories with subjective eligibility criteria—mental retardation, emotional disturbance, developmental delay—African-American male students are dramatically over-represented. Misclassification or inappropriate placement in special education is devastating for minority students, especially when the placement means removal from the regular-education setting, the core curriculum, or both. Students facing such exclusionary practices almost always encounter a narrower curriculum and lower expectations than their peers. The state and school systems must systematically examine everything that influences overrepresentation—pre-referral interventions, family involvement, effective instruction in the regular-education class-room, pre-service teacher training, and professional development—so that African-American male students are no longer consigned disproportionately to special education, where their chances of receiving an equal and adequate education are further eroded and their prospects of post-school success dramatically diminished.

Increase the proportion of African-American males taking the PSAT in 10th grade and provide them the academic preparation and support they need to score well on it.
The PSAT is, hands down, the best practice for the SAT. Students who take the PSAT as sophomores and juniors score 115 points higher on the SAT than students who take it as juniors alone. Long before the PSAT raises scores on the SAT, though, it does something equally important: It starts students thinking about the SAT—and, by extrapolation, about college. It encourages them to explore options they may not have considered before and to envision a life they may have thought was destined for someone else. Of course, participation isn't everything. Encouraging African-American students to take the test without giving them the academic support to do well on it sets them up for failure—equally crushing, one imagines, as never having been set up to succeed. We cannot continue to encourage PSAT participation if we're unable to improve performance, for raising expectations only to dash them is a cruel compromise.

Ensure that every public high school offers an Advanced Placement (AP) program and that the prevalence of African-American males enrolled in AP reflects the demographics of the overall student population.

While African-American males' AP participation and performance have seen enormous improvement over the last several years, the fact remains that they've come so far largely because they had so far to go. Of the 32,000 African-American male sophomores, juniors, and seniors who could have taken an AP exam in 2005, just 1,229 did. And fewer than four in ten of them earned a college-mastery score. African-American males are—by far—the most poorly represented among AP test-takers. Improving their test participation and performance is essential because AP is the standard-bearer for rigorous coursework, one of the most highly regarded distinctions on the high school record, and an objective gauge of ultimate college success. Plus, the AP experience has proved especially valuable to students without a family history of college attendance, to students without a "book culture" at home, among peer groups that don't factor education into future plans, and in schools that don't strongly emphasize college preparation. Of course, with an increasingly large and diverse AP population, students are far from invulnerable to program deficiencies. Increasing enrollment among African-American males means little if their schools' programs aren't worth enrolling in.

In-school support

Increase and improve in-school, supervised suspension programs focused on academic development and behavioral counseling. Significantly reduce out-of-school, unsupervised suspensions.

In 2004–05, six in every ten suspensions went to an African-American student (even though studies show that racial differences in behavior fail to sufficiently explain racial differences in school punishment). And yet suspension, as typically employed, has proved a particularly ineffective deterrent for misbehavior. Some research indicates, instead, that it either puts a child on the path toward delinquency or accelerates his journey there. In-school suspension, however, counteracts many of the more damaging effects of out-of-school suspension in that instructional time continues without interruption, and intensive academic help can be provided to students as needed—as can one-on-one personal and behavioral counseling. In-school suspension tends to reduce the daytime juvenile crime rate highly correlated with out-of-school suspensions and yet it's sufficiently punitive to deter infractions. Of course, administrators still have the authority to use out-of-school suspensions for more serious offenses and for those governed by a zero-tolerance policy. Admittedly, in-school suspension takes a lot of staff time, planning, and money—but, when done right, its pay-off is well worth the investment.

Establish within African-American-majority schools some single-sex classes primarily enrolling students with academic, attendance, and discipline problems.

For historically disadvantaged students, single-sex classes have shown a consistently positive effect on academic outcomes—an effect explained by a number of plausible theories: single-sex classes are typically smaller than co-ed classes; same-gender teachers serve as role models for the students; teachers' gender bias is reduced; enrollment in single-sex classes requires parent and student choice. Nonetheless, this is a controversial recommendation, as many believe that policies and practices segregating students rather than integrating them rarely serve the common good. African-American male youth, however, are already segregated—most notably by disproportionate placement in special education and non-college-prep classes. And integration doesn't always work either. In classes where gender and racial differences are suppressed—rather than served—it's almost always the African-American male who loses out.

Assign to all high-risk African-American male students an advocate to work through academic and disciplinary problems and provide college and career guidance.

Ideally, <u>every</u> student would have an advocate—someone who listens to him, who intercedes on his behalf, who convenes the people, agencies, and services that can help him, who facilitates his success in school and prepares him for life after it. But given that counselors already carry nearly twice the desired caseload, this kind of personal, intensive advocacy for all is impossible. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that African-American males with significant academic or behavioral problems (those most at-risk for failing or dropping out) be assigned such a person from the school or from the community—someone with the time and training to be an effective mediator/counselor and the inclination to stop the hemorrhaging of Black males from our public schools.

Family and community support

Fund and provide direction for programs in which one-on-one and group mentoring is provided to African-American males. Focus mentor recruitment efforts on African-American men.

While non-instructional interventions are, in general, uneven in affecting school achievement, tightly controlled mentoring programs—involving intensive volunteer and youth screening, thorough training, close supervision, and explicit matching and meeting requirements—do have academic benefit. In the largest study of the mentoring effect, Big Brothers Big Sisters found that, in addition to inhibiting risky behaviors and improving parent and peer relationships, mentoring reduced the number of days students skipped school, increased their feelings of competence in doing schoolwork, and modestly improved their grade-point average. We recommend focusing mentor recruitment on African-American men to maximize identification between mentor and mentee; however, we also acknowledge that same-race matches won't always be possible and that matching an African-American male youth with a mentor of a different race is better than never matching him at all. We also recognize that mentoring's cost and reliance on volunteers will necessitate establishing priority placement criteria (age, family income, academic performance, behavior) and establishing group—as well as one-on-one—mentoring programs.

Provide educational materials to young African-American fathers and their children.

Father absence isn't exclusive to the Black family, but it has had a particularly devastating effect there. Sixty-two percent of all African-American households are headed by a single parent—almost always the mother. While we may not be able to immediately influence the social, economic, and cultural forces keeping African-American men from their homes, we can consistently and specifically appeal to them. We can show them how to help their children developmentally and academically. And we can provide them the resources they need to do it. The Task Force suggests using faith organizations as distribution centers because of their urban prevalence and their history of spiritual leadership in and practical partnership with the Black community. We also suggest using libraries, again, for their prevalence and for their dual aim of educational access and community cohesion. Finally, we suggest using Baltimore's Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History and Culture because its mission complements our own and because the two values the museum so proudly celebrates—freedom and self-determination—are ultimately unobtainable without an adequate education.

Encourage certain ex-offenders convicted of non-violent felonies to volunteer in their communities.

A child's education isn't contained to the classroom, and his teachers aren't the only ones instructing him. The lessons he learns on the street can easily trump those he learns in school. That's why reconnecting African-American men to their communities is so important. And given the scope of African-American incarceration, the men most in need of reconnecting are ex-inmates returning to the neighborhoods they left months or years earlier. There are 170,000

African-American boys in our public schools, and many of them are desperate to have Black men a meaningful presence in their lives. Maybe it's counterintuitive to put children and ex-offenders together. And maybe it's exactly what each one needs. Life's lessons aren't always learned from those who lived it flawlessly. There is nothing quite so credible as experience, and those who have it will, more effortlessly than others, earn students' attention. Obviously, the program would require strict eligibility restrictions, extensive background checks, and close and continued monitoring.

Prevention and intervention services

Provide high-quality early care and education to all children.
Neurological studies have shown that early experiences have a dramatic and specific effect on cognitive development and capacity, which means that children who start out behind will generally stay there. That's bad news for African-American boys, who start school woefully behind their peers. After a year in kindergarten, just 7 percent of them are reading. The Task Force recommends providing all children high-quality early care and education because the readiness gap is not a factor of socioeconomic status. (The gap is actually larger between more affluent White and African-American kindergarteners than between their poorer counterparts.) Plus, when all children learn together, all children are more successful—the more able children actually help the others learn. And finally, targeting preK programs only to at-risk youngsters tends to create separate and decidedly unequal programs for lower-, middle-, and upper-income children. The Task Force recommends two specific strategies for providing more children high-quality early care and education: 1) Fund a Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Center for every elementary school where there is a documented gap between African-American and White achievement. 2) Ensure that all early childhood programs—including Head Start, child care centers, family child care, and pre-kindergarten programs—provide a strong focus on emergent literacy.

In areas of high need, provide the physical, dental, and mental health services needed to support greater academic achievement.
Not only are African-American boys more likely than other children to suffer from common and chronic health problems that impair cognition and behavior, they're also less likely to receive treatment for them. Some researchers attribute as much as one-quarter of the gap in school readiness to racial differences in health conditions and maternal health and behavior. Given the inextricable link between a child's physical, emotional, and mental health and his or her academic success, schools must help level the playing field for African-American males, who are so physically imperiled. One way to do so is to expand Maryland's School-Based Health Centers, which supply low-income children with primary, mental, and dental health care; prevention programs; health education; and associated social services. Another is to expand the Maryland Meals for Achievement Program, which provides all students a daily, in-classroom breakfast—regardless of family income.

Increase funding for correctional education programs so that every resident receives the academic and occupational services he needs to transition back into his school and community.
Statewide, nearly one in ten African-American men, aged 20–30, is in prison or jail, and nearly three in ten are under some form of criminal justice control. Unfortunately, the money used to incarcerate Black men rarely stretches far enough to educate them. A 10-year, 54-percent growth in Maryland's inmate population was met with a 4-percent growth in correctional education positions. This means, at any given time, there are about 1,800 inmates on a waiting list for educational programs, and, each day, we'll provide services to fewer than 4,000 of the 24,000 inmates in our correctional facilities. That's unfortunate because, by all accounts, Maryland's correctional education program is a good one. It's unfortunate, too, because studies indicate that attending school behind bars significantly reduces recidivism. Ninety-five percent of all inmates will eventually be released. With most of them no better off academically than when they were

sentenced, the majority will commit new crimes within three years. And another generation of children disconnected from their fathers—lacking support, discipline, encouragement, and hope—will make their very same mistakes. Some already have. MSDE is taking over the education programs in Maryland's 13 juvenile facilities. It's an understatement to say that the instructional rooms in these facilities aren't conducive to learning. In fact, they're decaying—which makes a successful transition back to the public school even more elusive.

College preparation and financial assistance

Help African-American males make the transition from high school to college.
African Americans who defy the odds and go to college—even those who complete a college-prep curriculum—may find the hurdles not lowered post-admission, but raised. Forty-eight percent of those on the college track have to take a remedial math course once they enroll; 35 percent have to take a remedial reading course; and 27 percent have to take a remedial English course. African-American students end their first year in college with a lower grade-point average than White or Asian students and are less likely to receive a C or better in their first math and English courses. Remediation doesn't just cost students time and money. It's a morale-sapping endeavor—one that substantially inhibits the likelihood that these students will graduate at all. The Task Force recommends two strategies for helping African-American males make the transition from high school to college: 1) Align high school graduation requirements with the University System of Maryland entrance requirements. 2) Develop in all high schools articulation models with two- and four-year colleges.

Make college financially viable for African-American males.
African-American men constitute just 8.5 percent of Maryland's college population. And only one-third of those enrolled will ever graduate. Admittedly, financial need is just one reason for these dismal numbers—but an important one nonetheless. At Maryland's public four-year colleges, tuition climbed 33 percent from 2000 to 2004. In fall 2006, a year at UMCP will cost an in-state undergraduate one-quarter of what the average African-American family earns. And yet states and universities are increasingly abandoning income-based aid in favor of merit aid, a move credited with denying college access to more than a quarter-million qualified students nationwide—a disproportionate number of them minorities. The Task Force recommends three strategies for helping African-American males afford college: 1) Provide full funding for state need-based grant and scholarship programs and extend them to certain incarcerated students. 2) Promote the availability of federal and state financial aid and scholarship programs to students enrolled at community colleges and Maryland's Historically Black Institutions. 3) Convene private organizations to provide tuition assistance to African-American male students, including certain incarcerated students.

Provide a support system for African-American males in college.
Academic under-preparedness isn't the only reason African-American males drop out of college at a higher rate than any other student population. Nonacademic factors—such as a lack of confidence, social segregation, and emotional isolation—are often just as powerful. Diversity initiatives not only increase access, retention, and success among traditionally under-represented students, they actually improve <u>all</u> students' level of satisfaction with their institutions and positively influence their academic growth. Curricular diversity; involvement in specialized student organizations; formalized, institutionally supported inter-group contact; and a perceived university-wide commitment to diversity predict greater cohesion, satisfaction, and retention among minority and majority students alike. In fact, for African-American males, this kind of university-based instrumental support appears to be the <u>primary</u> determinant of college satisfaction. While Maryland's community and public four-year colleges have stepped up efforts to recruit and retain African-American students, nearly all still fail on at least one accountability measure. Developing programs that provide for African-American male students' social integration and emotional support—in addition to those promoting academic success—seems a promising place to start.

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Equity in education is a civil right
yet unrealized.

      National Black Caucus of State Legislators

Charge

In 1993, the Governor's Commission on Black Males, chaired by then Delegate Elijah E. Cummings, issued a report that studied the conditions of African-American males in Maryland as they related to employment, health conditions, criminal justice, and education. The report provided important findings and powerful recommendations in each of the areas studied. The Commission provided us a "snapshot of the plight of the black males in Maryland." Chairman Cummings further stated that "the picture taking is over and now is the time to use this picture as a guide and catalyst for action."

In the ensuing years, a number of state and local agencies have implemented initiatives to address the issues and recommendations contained within the original report. In 1998, the Maryland State Department of Education—through its Maryland's Achievement Initiative for Maryland's Minority Students (AIMMS)—produced a report entitled *Minority Achievement in Maryland: The State of the State*. A second report, with expanded analysis and additional recommendations, was published in January 2001 by AIMMS. The two reports clearly—and without ambiguity—provided information indicating that many of the factors identified in the 1993 document persist today. While both the 1998 and 2001 reports dealt with education performance for all students, the disaggregation of the information once again points to serious and continuing problems concerning the education and development of Maryland's African-American boys and young men.

Therefore, on this the 10th anniversary of the *Report of the Governor's Commission on Black Males*, Maryland's K–16 Leadership Council establishes a Blue Ribbon Task Force, the Task Force on the Education of Maryland's African-American Males, to evaluate and report on the State's efforts and progress to address the continuing school performance and educational achievement problems that so seriously imperil the future of many of our African-American males.

Further, the K–16 Leadership Council provides the following charge to the Task Force:

Review critically past and current performance information and describe to the public the strengths and weaknesses of the current public education system and community supports as they relate to the education and development of African-American males in the following areas:

- Preparation and development of pre-school readiness;
- Performance of students on objective measures of academic achievement in reading, math, and science;
- Performance of schools relating to attendance, suspension/expulsion, and graduation rates;
- Participation of students in advanced and rigorous programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, including gifted and talented programs, core/rigorous high school courses, and PSAT, SAT, and AP participation and performance;
- Preparation for career development, entrepreneurship, and meaningful employment in Maryland's growing economy;
- Participation of high school graduates in higher education including enrollment, remediation, and graduation rates;
- Disproportionate placement in special education and alternative programs;
- The nature of family and community involvement needed to improve student outcomes;
- Negative societal and self-perceptions of African-American males as "low achievers"; and
- The adequacy of human and financial resources within communities to achieve needed advancements.

> We have people who are dying **physically, spiritually, and emotionally** ...
>
> Rep. Elijah E. Cummings
> Governor's Commission on Black Males

In fulfilling its task, the Task Force on the Education of African-American Males will review current research and effective interdisciplinary practices from both within the State and across the nation concerning the improvement of the education of African-American males so that its recommendations are scientifically based and supported by solid research and effective practices.

It is further charged that the Task Force on the Education of African-American Males will report its findings, recommendations, and suggested implementation plans (including assignment of lead agencies, an implementation timeline, and responsibilities regarding progress monitoring), and evaluate their effects on student gains to the K–16 Leadership Council on or about April 5, 2004.

June 9, 2003

[This task force] will be important only if **we have the will and the stomach to force the kinds of changes that need to be made**. We don't want this report to be one of those that sits on the shelf, gathering dust.

Orlan Johnson
Task Force Co-Chair

Introduction

African-American male youth have been branded violent, uneducated, uneducable, drug-addicted, malevolent, deficient, defiant, recalcitrant, hostile, ungovernable, immoral, amoral.

And yet when the Task Force talked with the boys, teens, and young men for whom we wrote this report, they told us that—most of all—they want teachers who care for them, who believe in them, who expect as much from them as anyone else, and who will give them as much. They want safe classrooms and secure playgrounds. They want rigor and discipline tempered with compassion and love. They want their school staffed with people who don't think authority and empathy are mutually exclusive or that equity is impossible. The want teachers and administrators who aren't afraid of them but aren't afraid to care about them either.

The young men we talked to weren't angry. They were hurting. And they didn't feel forgotten as much as they felt forsaken.

With good reason. On nearly every indicator—from birth to death—the Black male is at a disadvantage. By almost any standard, he is in trouble. He has the worst academic and attendance records and the most suspensions and expulsions. He is the most likely to drop out or fail out of school, the least likely to be employed, and the most likely to be incarcerated. He is sicker than anyone else in America and will die at a younger age.[1]

And, lest the argument be made, let us say preemptively that these conditions don't plague only poor Black males. In too many discussions of African-American achievement, race and poverty become synonymous. They're not. And we've tried hard to separate the two, for literally hundreds of studies have documented depressed achievement among African-American males—even when they suffer no major economic disadvantage. Poverty merely exacerbates it.

The public schools aren't to blame for all of this. Not all of society's problems can be fixed in the schoolhouse. But it's incontrovertible that the start one has in life will predict with strong accuracy its balance. The Maryland State Department of Education, therefore, must be a convener of all agencies and organizations that own a part of this problem. And, yes, we all own some of it.

We could explain here why immediate and significant action on behalf of our African-American males is necessary—how with Maryland on pace to soon become a majority-minority state, better educating African-American youth is economically imperative and fiscally prudent. And it is.

We could explain here why the consequences of inaction—perpetual poverty, drug dependency, violent crime, cultural deterioration, pervasive fear—are just too grim to suffer. And they are.

But the reader likely knows as well as we that there is a natural morality of mankind—that there are things that are implicitly and explicitly right and need no defense. This is not only one of those things, it is the most important of them.

The reader also knows that the recommendations in this report—however well-intentioned—mean nothing if they're left to languish on a shelf. Therefore, we recommend that the charging agencies—the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland—earmark money in their budgets for an independent implementation evaluation in 2–3 years' time.

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[1] Lionel Brown, "America's Black Male: Disadvantaged from Birth to Death," *Perspectives on Urban Education*, University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, Winter 2004

We need to have personal relationships
with our teachers.
We need to know they care about us.
We need to know they're trying to relate.

Student
Harbor City Learning Center

Skilled, culturally competent teachers

Place the most effective teachers in the highest need classrooms and place the most effective principals in the highest need schools.

This Task Force isn't the first to suggest giving the best teachers to the children who need them the most. It's a popular—if always unimplemented—recommendation. Its popularity stems from the fact that years of research prove not only that teacher quality matters, but that it matters more than anything else. Its implementation status stems from the fact that there's never been sufficient political will in this state to begin the hard work of it—and to confront the organizations, change the culture, and eliminate the boundaries that prevent it from moving forward.

The Teacher Effect

The most painstaking and persuasive studies proving the supremacy of teacher quality were undertaken by William Sanders (and various associates) in the mid- to late 1990s. He found that, in the extreme, 5th-graders with highly ineffective teachers in grades 3–5 scored about 50 percentile points below children—of comparable previous achievement—who had highly effective teachers over those same grades. For 4th-graders scoring in the lowest quartile in math, the probability of passing an 8th-grade-level test ranged from 15 to 60 percent, depending on their sequence of teachers and how effective they were.[1]

The massive scope of the teacher effect wasn't the only notable finding. Among Sanders' other conclusions:
- Teacher effect can be separated from that of race/ethnicity, wealth, and parent influence.
- Teacher effect increases with grade and is most pronounced in math.
- Teacher effect on student achievement is measurable at least four years after students have left that teacher.
- The damage inflicted by having an ineffective teacher—or a series of them—is rarely reversed by having more effective teachers later on.
- Regardless of race, children of similar previous achievement levels tend to respond similarly to the same teacher.
- Teacher quality is a far more reliable predictor of academic success than students' earlier achievement, class size, and ethnic and socioeconomic classification.[2]

Where the Good Teachers Go

There are, of course, many tremendously talented teachers in Maryland's urban, low-income schools. But predictably, you'll find most of our highly qualified teachers in the highly affluent schools. It's in the high-poverty, high-minority schools that one is more apt to find teachers untrained in their subject and inexperienced in general.

Before the No Child Left Behind Act demanded stronger teacher qualifications, 22 percent of all core academic secondary classes in Maryland were taught by teachers without a major—or even a minor—in the subject they taught.[3] In high-minority schools, the number of teachers teaching out-of-field jumped to 35 percent. Nationwide, the math classroom was the hardest hit: In high-poverty schools, 43 percent of all math classes were taught by teachers who neither majored nor minored in math, versus 27 percent of classes in low-poverty schools.[4]

But even today, the teacher-quality gap persists: In Maryland, 85 percent of classes in wealthy schools[a] are taught by highly qualified teachers,[b] versus just 58 percent of classes in poor schools.[5][c]

> Classes in high-poverty schools are 77 percent more likely to be assigned to an out-of-field teacher than classes in low-poverty schools.
> *All Talk, No Action: Putting an End to Out-of-Field Teaching*

Teachers in high-poverty schools aren't just less trained, they're less experienced, too. Twenty percent of teachers in poor schools have three or fewer years of teaching experience, compared with 11 percent of teachers in affluent schools.[6]

Do teacher training and experience matter? Unequivocally, yes. The (quantifiable) variables most closely correlated with student achievement are teachers' subject-matter training,[d] literacy level, selectivity of the college attended, and experience.[7][e]

The formula must be familiar by now: Well-trained, well-rounded teachers produce well-educated students. High-poverty, high-minority schools have substantially fewer of these teachers than wealthy, White schools. And yet attempts to even out the disparity have been rather weak, if well-intentioned. In 1999, the General Assembly passed the Quality Teacher Incentive Act. Part of the funding package was a $2,000 annual stipend awarded to any teacher with an Advanced Professional Certificate—held by nearly half of Maryland's teaching force[8]—who teaches in a low-performing school. Last year, the number of teachers collecting the stipends dropped 264 to 2,619[9]—fewer than qualified for the stipend when the Act was passed. Perhaps $2,000 isn't the incentive it used to be.

Nationally, efforts to improve teacher quality in high-poverty, low-performing schools have been similarly uneven and unfocused. States and districts generally tackle the problem of overall teacher supply, assuming that increasing the number of teachers will benefit all schools—including those hardest to staff. But the positive effects of such broad efforts rarely trickle down to the most vulnerable schools. Alternatively, districts craft piecemeal solutions that have minimal, short-term impact.[10]

According to many researchers, recruiting teachers into high-poverty, high-minority schools is less than half the problem. It's keeping them there that's hard. Poor schools lose more than one-fifth of their faculty each year. This staggeringly high turnover rate is due, in part, to lower salaries, but also to inadequate support from the school administration, too many intrusions on teaching time, discipline problems, and limited faculty input into decision-making.[11]

That's why the Learning First Alliance has called for improving the leadership and working conditions in high-poverty schools, as well as the preparation and professional support their teachers are provided. The organization recommends incentives for taking on these tougher teaching assignments and for improving student performance once there. It calls for more equitable funding of high-poverty, hard-to-staff schools, a coherent set of federal, state, and local policies that promote recruitment and retention, and practices that facilitate quicker hiring and placement.[12]

The Highly Qualified Teacher and the Hard-to-Staff School

In May 2005, the Maryland State Teachers Association won an NEA grant to expand two teacher-quality initiatives beyond Montgomery County, where they began.

Teacher Development Schools

Teacher Development Schools use intense professional development to strengthen teaching in high-need, urban schools. The schools—which must be Title I and demonstrably hard to staff—focus on analyzing students' work, building a professional community, and sharing strategies for closing the achievement gap. Teachers are encouraged to pursue National Board Certification and to join an electronic learning community of accomplished teachers. Board-certified teachers serve as external coaches.

Board Certified Teachers Network

The grant will also help maintain a network of Board-certified teachers to study education policy, provide skill development in educational leadership, and encourage minority teachers and those in low-performing schools to pursue National Board Certification. ■

A Commitment Long Overdue

We've known for a long time that the best way to keep African-American children from achieving is to continue staffing their schools with the least experienced, least trained teachers. It's the worst-kept secret in education. A secret better kept is that it doesn't have to be this way.

Maryland can be a leader on this issue, we can change the national dialogue, we can resolve to be the first—if we want it badly enough. So the question is, why don't we?

In *Achievement Matters Most*—where this same recommendation appeared in 2002—the Visionary Panel for Better Schools wrote, "Each year that we talk about what we believe without actually doing it means one more year that we fail to deliver on a promise made to Maryland's students."[13] It's 2005 now, and it's time we stopped failing them.

➲ Responsibility: local school systems, Maryland State Teachers Association, Baltimore Teachers Union

The Highly Qualified Principal and the Hard-to Staff School

Distinguished Principal Fellowship Program

When Maryland's Distinguished Principal Fellowship Program was launched in 2002, four of the state's most effective principals were paid $125,000 a year to work in four of Baltimore City's poorest performing schools.

According to an evaluation released in January 2006, test scores and attendance improved in the four participating schools. Plus, surveyed staff and stakeholders said the schools had increased parent and community involvement and aligned school culture to student and adult learning.

Principals selected for the fellowships agree to lead the schools in which they're placed for three years; build the school's capacity to sustain effective leadership over time; and help develop high-quality professional development for the district's principals.

House Bill 995, approved by the General Assembly in 2005, paved the way for a statewide rollout of the program.

New Leaders for New Schools

New Leaders for New Schools is a national non-profit organization that recruits and trains educators and former educators to become urban school principals.

In February 2005, Baltimore became the nation's sixth New Leaders site, and Maryland became the first jurisdiction to allow New Leaders—rather than a college or university—to certify program graduates. New Leaders plans to train 40 principals for Baltimore within three years—enough to fill one-fifth of the City's principalships.

Candidates are recruited and screened through extensive networks, and complete an intensive summer training program. Each shadows an experienced principal for a year, then receives three years of on-the-job coaching when assigned to his or her own school.

About half of the projected $3 million funding the three-year Baltimore program will be paid by the school district and local philanthropies, with national foundations providing the rest. ∎

1   June C. Rivers and William L. Sanders, "Teacher Quality and Equity in Educational Opportunity: Findings and Policy Implications," *Teacher Quality*, Lance T. Izumi and Williamson M. Evers, eds., 2002
2   ibid
3   Craig D. Jerald, "All Talk, No Action: Putting an End to Out-of-Field Teaching," The Education Trust, August 2002
4   "Education Secretary Paige Addresses First Annual Teacher Quality Evaluation Conference," U.S. Department of Education, June 12, 2002, retrieved at http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2002/06/061102.html?exp=1
5   *2005 Maryland Report Card*, Maryland State Department of Education, 2005
6   *Qualified Teachers for At-Risk Schools: A National Imperative*, National Partnership for Teaching in At-Risk Schools, 2005
7   Kate Walsh and Christopher O. Tracy*, Increasing the Odds: How Good Policies Can Yield Better Teachers*, National Council on Teacher Quality, 2005
8   *2005 Maryland Report Card*, Maryland State Department of Education, 2005
9   "FY 2001–2004 Teacher Quality Stipend Data," Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Certification and Accreditation, March 2006
10 *Qualified Teachers for At-Risk Schools*, op cit
11 Richard M. Ingersoll, *Why Do High-Poverty Schools Have Difficulty Staffing Their Classrooms With Qualified Teachers?* Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future: A National Task Force on Public Education, November 2004
12 *A Shared Responsibility: Staffing All High-Poverty, Low-Performing Schools With Effective Teachers and Administrators*, The Learning First Alliance, May 2005
13 *Achievement Matters Most: The Final Report of the Visionary Panel for Better Schools*, Maryland State Department of Education, January 2002

a   "Wealthy" (low-poverty) schools are those in the lowermost quartile in terms of students receiving free and reduced-price meals. "Poor" (high-poverty) schools are those in the uppermost quartile.
b   "Highly qualified," as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act, means the teacher has a bachelor's degree and full state certification and has demonstrated content knowledge in the subject(s) he or she teaches.
c   Overall, 75 percent of classes are taught by "highly qualified" teachers.
d   secondary teachers only
e   Research suggests a non-linear relationship between experience and effectiveness. That is, teacher effectiveness improves each year over the first 4 to 5 years in the classroom. After that, the effect diminishes.

Recruit African-American men into teaching.

There are 167,346 African-American male students in Maryland's public schools,[1] but only 2,672 African-American men teaching them.[2] Black males make up 19.3 percent of the state's student population, but just 4.8 percent of its teaching force. With less than five in 100 teachers Black men, the one student in five who needs them the most likely won't see any at all.

That's especially tragic because the fact is many African-American boys don't see many African-American men—period. Not in school and not at home. In Maryland, more than four in 10 African-American children live in single-parent households—almost all of them run by women.[3] And in Baltimore, where nearly one-quarter of the state's African-American children live and go to school, few of the men they do see are worthy role models. Nearly one in ten Baltimore adults is drug-dependent.[4] Every other African-American man in his 20s is incarcerated, on parole, or on probation. One in five is in jail or prison.[5]

The argument that African-American boys need not just good teachers—but good African-American male teachers—comes most passionately from the boys themselves. The Task Force met with dozens of African-American male students—students in elementary school, middle school, high school, and college—and all said they needed to see more African-American men in the classroom.

Many reasoned that "sober, caring, spiritually guided" men in school might make up for their lack in the home and on the street. And maybe cure their disillusionment. One student said it's not just the drug dealers that feed his disdain for the Black men in his neighborhood; it's the customers—his customers, his friends' customers. These aren't men you look up to; these aren't relationships that breed respect. He said he needs to see Black men who deserve his attention and have earned his esteem.

> If we really expect to see a change in the current situation, men have to get involved in this process, because it takes a Black man to prepare a Black boy for whatever he's going to face out there.
>
> Spencer Holland
> Morgan State University

To some, it's about empathy: "I need someone who can relate to me." To others, compassion: "I need someone who cares about me." To others, control: "Black men aren't scared of us the way other teachers are." And still others, it's simply seeing the option of something else—something better and safer than thug life, and something more realistic than NBA/rap stardom.

Develop a teacher preparation program that allows African-American men to work as paraprofessionals and progress toward full teaching certification.

Paraprofessionals[a] are a desirable—yet largely untapped—supply of future teachers.

- **Paraprofessionals who become teachers tend to keep teaching.** In one pilot program, more than 80 percent of paraprofessionals provided financial assistance and other support while working toward traditional certification were still teaching after three years. Given that half of the 2,700 teachers Maryland annually graduates from its education colleges will never teach in Maryland or will leave within their first five years, a three-year, 80-percent retention figure is encouraging.
- **Paraprofessionals help fill critical content and geographical shortages.** In the same pilot program, nearly 90 percent of the former paraprofessionals still teaching after three years were teaching in urban areas. A substantially broader National Education Association (NEA) survey found that more than 70 percent of para-professionals work with students in special education.

- **Paraprofessionals are part of the community.** The NEA survey found not only that three of four paraprofessionals live in the school district where they work but that they have, on average, for 25 years. They understand their students' background, families, culture, and neighborhoods.
- **Paraprofessionals inject color into the teaching pool.** The majority of paraprofessionals in teacher education programs are minorities. By helping them become teachers, we can close the gap between minorities' prevalence in the student population and their prevalence in the teaching force.[6]

➲ Responsibility: Maryland State Department of Education

Promote the Associate of Arts in Teaching program to attract African-American men into the profession.

One teacher in five begins his career at a community college.[7] Forty-three percent of all Black postsecondary students are enrolled in one.[8] And fully half their teacher candidates transfer to a four-year college—doubling the 22-percent transfer rate of other community-college programs.[9] Surely, then, the two-year college is a promising pipeline for producing more African-American male teachers.

Until recently, however, community college degree-holders typically had to retake courses following their transfer to a four-year college. The amount of time and money this tacked onto students' schooling often persuaded them to switch majors. That hurdle is what the Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) was designed to eliminate.[b] Because the AAT is a seamless transfer program aligned with MSDE's teacher certification requirements and with National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education standards, a degree-holder can transfer to any four-year institution in Maryland without taking duplicative coursework. Required field experience in local schools also encourages students to stick with the program.

The AAT degree has a lot of potential: the potential to produce more teachers, to produce more African-American teachers, and to produce more teachers truly prepared for the classrooms—and the students—they'll face.

➲ Responsibility: Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Higher Education Commission

Convene private organizations to furnish incentives for African-American men to pursue teaching.

To the many philanthropic organizations offering need-based college aid, we must argue that sometimes an applicant's color and gender matter as much as his income. To the many organizations offering college aid for students pursuing specific majors, we must persuade them that teaching is among the worthiest. To the many organizations that haven't thought about offering college aid at all, we must convince them of its benefits.

Because the state is legally unable to offer financial incentives[c] based on race or gender, we must rely on our private partners to do so. And we must prove to them why they should.

There are some things **Black men** need to teach **Black men.**

Student Institute for Student Leadership and Character Development Morgan State University

⮑ **Responsibility:** Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Business Roundtable for Education

1   *2005 Maryland Report Card,* Maryland State Department of Education, 2005

2   *The Fact Book:* 2004–2005, Maryland State Department of Education, 2005

3   *Kids Count Pocket Guide: African-American Children*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003

4   "Drug Addiction Treatment Program," Open Society Institute, © 2005, retrieved at http://www.soros.org/initiatives/baltimore/focus_areas/drug_addiction,

5   Eric Lotke and Jason Ziedenberg, *Tipping Point: Maryland's Overuse of Incarceration and the Impact on Public Safety*, Justice Policy Institute, March 2005

6   Christine L. Smith, "Focus on an Untapped Classroom Resource: Helping Paraprofessionals Become Teachers," Southern Regional Education Board, April 2003

7   "Rx for Solving Nation's Teacher Shortage: Community Colleges Educate One in Five U.S. Teachers; Can Help Cut Shortage of 2.4 Million Teachers by One Quarter," National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse, October 23, 2002

8   *2005 Data Book: Creating a State of Achievement*, Maryland Higher Education Commission, 2005

9   "Meeting the Challenge of the Teacher Shortage: Community Colleges Step Up to the Plate," *AAC&U News*, June 2003

[a]   The No Child Left Behind Act requires all paraprofessionals working in Title I programs to have completed one of the following: two years of postsecondary education, an associate's degree, or a formal assessment that demonstrates their skills.

[b]   It also eliminated the 352 separate articulation agreements between Maryland's 16 two-year and 22 four-year colleges—agreements that did little but obscure for students whether, which, and how many credits would transfer with them. Maryland was the first state to offer the AAT degree.

[c]   scholarships, loan forgiveness, stipends, signing bonuses

Include in teacher preparation programs cultural competency training, especially as it relates to African-American males, and make teachers demonstrate effectiveness in this area.

Not only do teacher preparation programs turn out a surprisingly uniform cadre of teachers—European American, low-middle/middle class, monolingual English, from rural or suburban backgrounds[1]—there's evidence that Maryland's teachers are growing even more similar while their students grow more diverse. White teachers comprise 76 percent of Maryland's teaching force—White women alone, 58 percent—while, for the first time ever, White students are a minority in Maryland's public schools.[2]

The Great Race Divide

While the growth in minority student enrollment continues its steady rise, 2004's 1-percent dip in minority teacher candidates erased the spotty improvement in staff diversity that had been made since 1999.[a] And 2004's 2-percent climb in minority new hires still puts us nearly 3-percent shy of 2002's high, when 31 percent of all teachers newly hired in Maryland were minorities.[3] Plus, the 3:1 female-to-male ratio among teachers hasn't budged over the last several years,[4][b] as surely the much longer running 1:1 ratio among students will not.

But race and gender only scratch the surface of teacher/student differences, because these two differences imply so many more. Twenty-three percent of Maryland's African-American children live in high-poverty neighborhoods, 30 percent live in neighborhoods with a high drop-out population, and 22 percent live in neighborhoods with a high unemployment rate.[5] Forty-three percent of all new cases brought before the Department of Juvenile Services involve African-American male youth.[6]

The Problem of Us vs. Them

The problem with Maryland's teaching force being overwhelmingly White, female, and middle-class and its students not being overwhelmingly any of these things is that studies have documented pre-service teachers' parochial (at best) and negative (at worst) dispositions toward diversity and toward students unlike them racially, linguistically, and socioeconomically.[7]

The socio-cultural mismatch—with or without the accompanying antagonism—breeds bias, stereotyping, conflict, miscommunication, low expectations, low motivation, and ultimately (because can instruction really withstand all that?) ineffective teaching.[8]

The bottom line is this: If we continue to produce teachers who look dramatically different than the students they teach, we must—at the very least—prepare them professionally and emotionally for those differences. Maryland has standards for communicating interculturally, for reducing prejudice, for establishing culturally supportive learning environments, for designing curricula and instruction that improve minority performance, and for using assessments to promote achievement equity. Every college of education should know those standards, should teach those standards, and should hold prospective teachers accountable for meeting them.

> *If all children are to be effectively taught, teachers must be prepared to address the substantial diversity in experiences students bring with them to school.*
>
> Linda Darling-Hammond
> Arthur Wise
> Stephen Klein
> *A License to Teach*

Use the Social Studies Task Force to advocate for poor, minority, and urban children in terms of a culturally relevant K–12 curriculum and culturally competent teachers.

In November 2004, State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick convened the Social Studies Task Force to examine:

- the social studies curriculum (content breadth and depth, grade-level indicators, discipline balance);
- the adequacy of instructional time, staff, and resources devoted to social studies;
- the cost and implications of a social studies assessment program;
- partnerships with organizations that can enhance social studies instruction; and
- teacher preparation and professional development in social studies content and pedagogy.

The task force is scheduled to end its work this summer. We recommend it remained convened—or a new group be assembled—to tackle, specifically, the relevance of the social studies curriculum to young African-American males and the cultural competence of those teaching it.

While many subjects offer opportunities to talk about the African-American experience, none lends itself to this discussion as naturally as social studies. It's a conversation that should be aided invaluably by the K–12 curriculum[c] linked to the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture (see box).

An African-American Journey

In fall 2005, elementary and middle school teachers across Maryland began using **An African American Journey**, 43 lessons connected to the exhibits of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture. The lessons—incorporating history, art, music, literature, geography, and economics—are intended to support a broad, multi-year program of study around the African-American experience.

In development for more than four years, the lessons are closely aligned with Maryland's standards and curriculum; tied to teachers' backgrounds for more expert delivery; designed to be enriched by the museum's artifacts, exhibits, and activities; and endorsed by dozens of local and national experts.

An African American Journey is meant to ensure that _all_ public school students understand how the African-American experience shaped our past and appreciate its implications for our future. But the curriculum's mission isn't purely academic. It is explicitly intended to prompt classroom discussion on divisive issues of race, to stimulate and broaden the way students view themselves as agents of change, and to challenge them to make this nation fulfill its promise as a just, inclusive, and equitable society. ■

⮞ **Responsibility:** Maryland Higher Education Commission, Maryland State Department of Education

Use the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education to ensure cultural competence among college and university faculty.

The problem of cultural competence doesn't end at grade 12, for college professors are even more homogenous than K–12 educators. Eighty in every 100 full-time instructors are White. Just five in 100 are Black.[9]

The effects of faculty homogeneity and other alienating conditions are perhaps even starker on college campuses than in K–12 classrooms. For African-American college students simply drop out—an option not open to their elementary and most of their secondary counterparts. At 46 percent, the college graduation rate among African Americans is an appalling 22 percentage points lower than it is among Whites.[10]

And with African Americans constituting a mere 17 percent of graduate students in Maryland and just 7 percent of PhD recipients, it's unlikely we'll fix the problem of a predominantly White faculty anytime soon.[11]

College Civil Right

Because of its history of *de jure* racial segregation, Maryland has an obligation under federal law and court decisions to remedy past discrimination and to remove the vestiges of dual and unequal education.

In December 2000, Maryland entered into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) to advance equal educational opportunity for African Americans.

Maryland agreed to strengthen academic and teacher preparation programs; partnerships with elementary and secondary schools; recruitment and admissions; retention and graduation; diversity among faculty/staff and governing/advisory boards; and Maryland's Historically Black Institutions.

While the agreement expired in December 2005, **Maryland's State Plan for Postsecondary Education** calls for MHEC to continue its annual evaluation of the state's performance in meeting the commitments outlined in the agreement with OCR, identify areas that still require attention, and determine how to further the progress that's already been made. ∎

We can, however, fix the problem of cultural competence. Maryland law requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to have and update a statewide plan for postsecondary education. According to that plan, colleges and universities— their programs, faculty, staff, and infrastructure— must foster a friendly, supportive, and attractive environment for racially and culturally diverse students.

Part of MHEC's response to this imperative is to host workshops focused on developing cultural competence among college faculty. This effort—combined with many others aimed at improving the recruitment, retention, and graduation of minority students— should have the net effect of producing more African-American undergraduates and, in turn, more African-American graduates, more African-American post-graduates, and ultimately, more African-American faculty. So that, in the future, neither cultural competence nor racial uniformity will be the problem it is today.

➲ Responsibility: Maryland Higher Education Commission

1   Nelly Ukpokodu, "Breaking Through Pre-service Teachers' Defensive Dispositions in a Multicultural Education Course: A Reflective Practice," Spring 2002
2   *The Fact Book: 2004–2005*, Maryland State Department of Education, 2005
3   *Maryland Teacher Staffing Report*, *2005–2007*, Maryland State Department of Education, August 2005
4   ibid
5   *Kids Count Pocket Guide: African-American Children*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003
6   *FY 2005 Annual Statistical Report*, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, 2005
7   Ukpokodu, op cit
8   ibid
9   Emily Forrest Cataldi, Mansour Fahimi, and Ellen M. Bradburn, "2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF:04) Report on Faculty and Instructional Staff in Fall 2003," National Center for Education Statistics, May 2005
10 *2004 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education*, Maryland Higher Education Commission, December 2004
11 ibid

a   From 1999 to 2004, minority student enrollment grew from 45 percent to 51 percent of total student enrollment. Meanwhile, the proportion of minority teacher candidates among all candidates remained at 18.4 percent.
b   According to the National Education Association, the proportion of men teaching today is the lowest it's been in 40 years. Just one-quarter of the nation's 3 million teachers are men. The percentage of men teaching in elementary schools has fallen steadily since 1981 (from 18 percent to 9 percent). The proportion of men teaching in secondary schools has fluctuated over the years, but now stands at its lowest level (35 percent).
c   currently completed for grades 4–8

If you don't make a choice to learn, you won't learn.

If you make that choice, you can learn anything.

Student
Eye-to-Eye: The Power of Personal
Invitations to Learning

High standards and academic opportunity

Stop the over-identification of African-American males for special education and draft a plan for exiting students from it.

In 2005, 2,119 African-American male students were identified as mentally retarded (62 percent of all identified male students); 4,051 as emotionally disturbed (57 percent); and 1,529 as developmentally delayed (44 percent).[1] Given that African-American males make up only 19 percent of Maryland's total student population, the case for over-identification is an easy one to make.

Segregation Redux

Nationally, African-American students are over-represented in 9 of 13 disability categories and, in mental retardation and developmental delay, constitute more than twice their share of the overall student population.[2] Interestingly, in special-education categories where a medical diagnosis is involved—severe mental retardation, visual impairment, hearing impairment, and physical disability—African-American representation is proportional to their percentage of the general school population.[3]

African-American children aren't just overrepresented in special education as a whole, they're also more likely to be placed in separate special-ed classrooms rather than with the general student population. Plus, African-American children in special education are particularly likely to be suspended. Eighteen of Maryland's 24 school systems fail in one of these three areas, meaning they have a "significantly disproportional" share of African-American students in special education, in separate special-ed classrooms, or on their list of suspended students. Five school systems now facing sanctions failed in all three areas.[4] In Maryland and across the U.S., disproportional special-ed representation has been the subject of lawsuits and legislation, picketers and protesters—with good reason.

The disparities are greatest in the categories with the most subjective eligibility criteria: mild mental retardation, specific learning disabilities, and emotional disturbance. In disability categories with a clearer medical or biological origin, such as traumatic brain injury or visual and hearing impairments, group differences are practically nil.
Debra Viadero
Education Week
Quality counts 2004

Misclassification or inappropriate placement in special education is devastating for minority students, especially when the placement means removal from the regular-education setting, the core curriculum, or both. Students facing such exclusionary practices almost always encounter a narrower curriculum and lower expectations than their peers. Of course, disproportionate representation also results in significant *de facto* segregation, which isn't just unethical—it's illegal. Special education has become an ever-expanding warehouse for African-American males, an option of first resort for teachers unaware of their own cultural bias and under-prepared for the complexities of teaching in a diverse classroom.

The Dumping Ground Explained

While many cite test bias and an over-reliance on testing, in general, for the special-education gap, others blame the subjectivity that inescapably invades testing decisions. After all, teachers decide whom to test, which tests to use, and when to use alternative tests. They have discretion in interpreting student responses and, often, in determining what weight to give results.[5]

Of course, several non-testing factors—such as cultural bias, school politics, the quality of instruction in the regular-education classroom, the power imbalance between parents and school personnel on the evaluation team, and the classroom-management skills of the referring teacher—are equally important, yet often ignored.[6]

Teachers themselves say that because special-ed is so well-funded, they place students there to get the attention and services they need. But the meticulously documented and publicized failings of special education—in 2005, just 28 percent of 8th–graders in special education met the state's proficient standard in reading and just 17 percent met it in math[7]—show just how risky this strategy is.

The state and school systems must systematically examine everything that influences over-representation and everything that reduces it—pre-referral interventions, family involvement, effective instruction in the general education classroom, pre-service teacher training, and professional development—so that African-American males are no longer consigned disproportionately to the special education classroom, where their chances of receiving an equal and adequate education are further eroded and their prospects of post-school success dramatically diminished.

Reducing Disproportionate Placement

While MSDE is unable to control the number of students referred for special-education evaluation (once a school system refers a child, IDEA requires that an evaluation be conducted), the Department does provide districts money for early intervention services, which should ultimately mean fewer students, in general—and fewer African-American boys, in particular—in special education. Per IDEA 2004, districts may use up to 15 percent of federal Part B funds on early intervention services. However, Maryland requires that districts with significant disproportionality (five districts in FY 2006) use the full 15 percent on early intervention—a combined $8 million.

Over the last two years, MSDE has awarded $596,000 to school systems to help them correct disproportionate representation. And in FY 2005 another $500,000 was allocated for training in a model proven to reduce unnecessary referrals. The Department reviews students' records to identify factors that may contribute to disproportionate representation and conducted an independent review of its efforts in 2004–05.

The Department is now working on establishing a better measure of disproportionality, developing a data warehouse with the Johns Hopkins University, and providing targeted assistance to districts with the highest disproportionate placement.

MSDE has also assembled a six-member stakeholder team to address disproportionate representation in specific disability categories. The team has consulted with national experts, examined the challenges of cultural responsiveness, agreed on areas of need and of further study, and begun identifying and prioritizing next steps. The team will make recommendations—based on their own discussions and those of the Special Education State Advisory Committee—and draft a 3– to 5–year action plan to guide future efforts. ∎

➲ Responsibility:

Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Association of Boards of Education, Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland, local school systems

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[1] Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Special Education, 2005
[2] "Disproportionality: Frequently Asked Questions," Elementary and Middle Schools Technical Assistance Center, © October 2002, retrieved at http://www.emstac.org/registered/topics/disproportionality/faqs.htm
[3] *Minority Students in Special and Gifted Education*, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Academies Press, 2002
[4] Daniel de Vise, "Special-Ed Racial Imbalance Spurs Sanctions," *Baltimore Sun*, August 2, 2005
[5] Daniel J. Losen and Gary Orfield, eds, *Racial Inequity in Special Education*, The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University Press, 2002
[6] ibid
[7] *2005 Maryland Report Card*, Maryland State Department of Education, 2005

Increase the proportion of African-American males taking the PSAT in 10th grade and provide them the academic preparation and support they need to score well on it.

The PSAT is critically important because it starts students on the college path—in more ways than one.

First, the test is simply the best practice there is for the SAT, which 80 percent of all colleges without open enrollment use in admissions decisions.[1] Unlike the SAT, though, the PSAT is a diagnostic tool. In addition to students' reading, writing, and math scores and national score comparisons, the test yields a question-by-question review of answers so test-takers can see which ones they got right and which they got wrong. Plus, students receive a personalized statement of specific academic skills that need attention, along with suggested steps to improve them.[2]

It's this preparatory aspect of the test that educators expressly want sophomores to take advantage of. The more practice students have with the PSAT, they reason, the better they'll do on the SAT. And the numbers bear that supposition out: Students who take the PSAT as juniors post an average SAT score of 976, but those who take it as juniors <u>and</u> sophomores[a] score 1091.[3]

Long before the PSAT raises scores on the SAT, though, it does something equally important: It starts students thinking about the SAT—and, by extrapolation, about college. It encourages them to explore options they may not have considered before, to dream bigger than they would have otherwise, to envision a life they may have thought was destined for someone else.

Expectation and Achievement

That students will achieve what's expected of them is a maxim for a reason. The literature on motivation and school performance suggests that expectations powerfully shape the learning experience, that merely stating an expectation results in better performance, that higher expectations result in higher performance, and that students with high expectations perform better than those with low expectations, even if their measured abilities are equal.[4]

It's an easy experiment, really, and yet one seldom tried on African-American male students. While the number of Black males taking the PSAT as sophomores or juniors has more than doubled in five years, that's still just half of all who could.[5][b] Overall, African-Americans make up 38 percent of Maryland's student population, but only 30 percent of those taking the PSAT. Among all races, that's the biggest discrepancy between student enrollment and test participants.[6]

That's not to say great strides haven't been made. They have. Twenty-two of Maryland's 24 school systems provide local funds for district-wide PSAT testing of diploma-bound sophomores.[c] And the overwhelming majority of those have set a 100-percent testing standard in their strategic plans.

That commitment has been particularly good to African-American students: In 2005, 63 percent of all African-American sophomores took the PSAT, more than double the proportion who took it in 2001.[d] Tenth-grade PSAT participation among African Americans jumped 44 percent over 2004 alone.[7] And African-American males accounted for 16 percent of all sophomore PSAT takers last year, a proportion that's just 3-percent shy of Black males' prevalence in the 10th–grade population.[8]

And yet, despite these gains, parity is hard to come by for African-American boys. For even on the PSAT—where sophomore census administrations are fast becoming the norm—Black males are more likely to be left behind.

And that's because participation isn't everything—a sentiment at the heart of Part 2 of this recommendation. Advising a student to take the PSAT is an implicit vote of confidence. It shows him that someone else shares his vision of the future—maybe even formed that vision and nurtured it before he did. It is a palpable indication of another's high expectations, a prediction of success.

Offering encouragement without academic support, however, sets that student up to fail—equally crushing, one imagines, as having never been set up to succeed. African-American male 10th–graders score, on average, 5.4 points lower than all students on the reading portion of the PSAT; 6.1 points lower on the math portion; and 6.0 points lower on the writing portion.[9][e] Is this why Black males' promising participation on the PSAT drops so significantly on the SAT?[10][f] We cannot continue to encourage test participation if we're unable to improve performance. Raising expectations only to dash them is a cruel compromise.

⮕ Responsibility: State and local boards of education

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[1] "Using Aggregate SAT Scores," The College Board, © 2005, retrieved at http://www.collegeboard.com/about/news_info/cbsenior/yr2004/ related.html

[2] "About PSAT/NMSQT," The College Board, © 2005, retrieved at http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html

[3] "State Integrated Summary 2004–2005: Maryland Public Schools," The College Board, August 2005

[4] Ross Miller, "Greater Expectations to Improve Student Learning," Association of American Colleges and Universities, November 2001

[5] "2005 PSAT/NMSQT Trend Report," The College Board, Staff Data Resource Software, 2005

[6] "State Integrated Summary 2005: Maryland Public Schools," op cit

[7] ibid

[8] "2005 PSAT/NMSQT Trend Report," op cit

[9] ibid

[10] "2005 SAT Trend Report," The College Board, Staff Data Resource Software, 2005

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[a] or younger

[b] In 2000, 5,652 African-American male sophomores and juniors took the PSAT; in 2005, 11,898 did. Among all races, sophomores and juniors account for 82 percent of all test-takers.

[c] In 2001, the Task Force to Study College Readiness for Disadvantaged and Capable Students recommended that school systems fully fund the cost of administering the PSAT to every 10th–grader and use the results to intervene with students not performing at grade level.

[d] In Maryland, 73 percent of all 10th graders took the PSAT in 2005, compared to just 45 percent in 2001. Nationwide, 27 percent of all 10th-graders took the PSAT. This low proportion is due, in part, to the fact that in 25 states, more than half of all college-bound graduates take the ACT college-admission exam, rather than the SAT.

[e] Each PSAT section is scored on a 20–80 point scale.

[f] While Black males make up 16 percent of sophomore PSAT-takers (and 14 percent of PSAT-takers overall), they make up only 10 percent of SAT takers.

Ensure that every public high school offers an Advanced Placement (AP) program and that the prevalence of African-American males enrolled in AP reflects the demographics of the overall student population.

Race and Rigor

There's a lot Maryland is doing right when it comes to AP. Nearly every public high school offers AP courses, making Maryland the nation's fourth-best state for AP access. Maryland ranks fifth nationwide in the number of students taking an AP science exam and second in the number taking AP calculus.[1]

Maryland's big push, though, has been to increase AP participation among underrepresented minority students—an effort that's paying off.[a] By 2005, the number of African-American students taking at least one AP exam had more than doubled since 2001. And African-Americans' 11.6-percent participation increase over 2004 eclipsed increases among both White and Asian students.[2][b]

Even more encouraging than booming participation, though, is the fact that—on the whole—it hasn't withered performance. Of the 58,246 AP exams taken in Maryland in 2005, nearly two-thirds were scored 3–5.[3][c] But the best indication of exemplary access and achievement is the fact that more than one in five graduating seniors had taken and "passed" an AP test—a measure on which Maryland ranks second nationwide.[4][d]

Obviously, African-American test-takers share in this success: A #2 performance ranking would be virtually impossible to achieve if they didn't. Since 2001, the number of African-American students scoring a 3–5 on at least one exam has jumped 91 percent.[5]

Improvement vs. Equity

Unfortunately, spiking numbers don't erase inequity; they just camouflage it. For the fact remains that African-American students have come so far largely because they had so far to go. African Americans make up 38 percent of Maryland's public school population but just 12 percent of AP test-takers. A mere 32 percent of the exams taken by African-American students earned a mastery-level score in 2005. And progress is slowing considerably: That 32-percent mastery rate is a meager 4-percent increase over 2004.[6]

African-American males are nearly out of the equity equation altogether, accounting for just one-third of all Black test-takers. Of the 32,000 African-American male sophomores, juniors, and seniors who could have taken an AP exam in 2005, just 1,229 did. Of the 1,229 who took an exam, just 462—fewer than four in ten—scored a 3–5.[7][e]

Why AP Matters

All these numbers and proportions—and all their implications for access and equity—are so important because Advanced Placement is the standard-bearer for rigorous coursework, one of the most highly regarded distinctions on the high school record, and an objective gauge of ultimate college success. Forty-five percent of students who take one AP course and 61 percent of students who take two or more graduate from college in four or fewer years. Only 29 percent of students who don't take any AP courses do the same.[8]

The AP experience has proved especially valuable to students without a family history of college attendance, to students without a "book culture" at home, among peer groups that don't factor education into future plans, and in schools that don't strongly emphasize college preparation. It's also proved valuable to minority students who aren't educationally or economically disadvantaged but who nonetheless face low expectations based on race alone.[9]

Quality Counts

Of course, access for minority students isn't everything. What we're granting them access to warrants at least as much attention. Because all AP programs—and, more to the point, all AP teachers—aren't created equal.

A 2002 study suggests that good teachers of minority students in AP classes are good teachers—period. They apply high standards fairly to all students. They have strong content knowledge and teaching skills. They make sure the most fundamental content and skills in the AP curriculum are well covered. They can and do use a variety of teaching techniques. They inform students—and, importantly, their parents—about college work and college life and make them feel comfortable with the prospect of postsecondary education.[10]

The myth that AP students are so well prepared and so motivated that they can practically teach themselves was probably never true. With the AP population growing larger and more diverse each year, it's certainly not true now. AP students are far from invulnerable to teacher deficiencies. And minority students in urban schools are the most vulnerable—and the most exposed—of them all.

Installing good AP programs in high-minority schools won't just help close the deplorable 33-percent mastery gap between African-American students and students overall. It will also attract more African-American students to the AP curriculum. AP teachers say that as their class scores go up, so does their class size.[11] That is, the most effective way to boost AP enrollment is to have an AP program worth enrolling in.

➲ Responsibility: State and local boards of education

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[1]   "Good News About Public Schools in Maryland," National Education Association, © 2002–2006, retrieved at http://www.nea.org/goodnews/md01.html#CCS
[2]   "State Integrated Summary 2004–05: Maryland Public Schools," The College Board, August 2005
[3]   ibid
[4]   *Advanced Placement Report to the Nation: 2006*, The College Board, 2006
[5]   "State Integrated Summary 2004–05: Maryland Public Schools," op cit
[6]   ibid
[7]   "2005 AP Trend Report," The College Board, Staff Data Resource Software, 2005
[8]   "Value of AP to Colleges and Universities," The College Board, © 2005, retrieved at http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/article/0,3045,154-179-0-36726,00.html
[9]   Nancy Burton, Nancy Burgess Whitman, Mario Yepes-Baraya, Frederick Cline, and R. Myung-in Kim, "Minority Student Success: The Role of Teachers in Advanced Placement Courses," College Entrance Examination Board, January 2002
[10] ibid
[11] ibid

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[a]   In 2004, the College Board gave its inaugural President's Award to Maryland for leading the nation in increasing AP participation among minority and low-income students. In 2006, Maryland was recognized for its overall college-mastery rate (second in nation), for its one-year and five-year (first in nation) rates of college-mastery improvement, and—with Florida and Washington, DC—for eliminating the Latino equity gap.
[b]   From 2004 to 2005, participation among White students rose 11.1 percent; among Asian students, participation rose 10.8 percent. From 2001 to 2005, African-American participation rose 106 percent; American Indian, +106 percent; Hispanic, +163 percent; Asian, +87 percent; and White, +69 percent. (All data refer to Maryland public schools only.)
[c]   According to the College Board, this score range indicates college-level mastery, but due to the unabated growth in AP participation, some colleges now award credit and/or placement only for scores of 4 or 5.
[d]   In Maryland, 21 percent of the class of 2005 scored 3–5 on at least one AP exam, dwarfing the U.S. median of 14 percent.

[e] What do these numbers mean when race defines a district? In Baltimore City, where nearly 9 in 10 students are African American, fewer than 7 in 10 AP test-takers are. Just 3 in 10 are male. In the City, 770 students took an AP exam in 2005, a mere 5 percent of the eligible population. And while Baltimore City boys made a rare show of outpacing their female classmates in improving participation and performance—they posted an unprecedented 34-percent gain in the number of AP exams taken and a 37-percent gain in the number earning a 3–5—overall mastery among African Americans in the City is still an anemic 13 percent.

If schools don't change, we'll feel like there's **one more place we're not welcome,** and **one more person who doesn't care.**
Student, Harbor City Learning Center

In-school support

Increase and improve in-school, supervised suspension programs focused on academic development and behavioral counseling. Significantly reduce out-of-school, unsupervised suspensions.

Suspension and Disproportionality

Since 1994, both violent and non-violent crime in school has dropped.[1][a] But you wouldn't have known it looking at Maryland's suspension data. In 10 years, the number of students suspended from school has increased from 6.6 percent of the total population to 8.4 percent.[2] For years, suspensions were used for increasingly minor infractions—such as truancy, class-cutting, and non-violent opposition to authority—and on increasingly younger students.

Over the last few years, though, Maryland has reversed the suspension trend. Last year alone, the number of suspended students decreased by 7,466—an 11-percent drop. In preK–3, 774 fewer students (4,246) were suspended, an 18-percent drop. And while 44 percent of all suspensions were meted out for transgressions involving attendance or disrespect/insubordination, comparatively small offenses are more often being punished without turning kids out of class.[3][b]

But there are some students who aren't reaping the benefits of this clemency. The students most frequently suspended—by far—are African-American boys. Of the 71,085 students suspended from school in 2004–05, 69 percent were boys, and 59 percent (42,293) were African American. That means 13 percent of the entire African-American student population—and a much larger share of the African-American male population—was suspended from school at some point in 2004–05.[4]

There's considerable evidence that a history of school suspension does one of two things—either it puts a child on the path toward delinquency or accelerates his journey there.[5] Suspension, then, is not only an ineffective deterrent for misbehavior, it's—at best—an accelerant and—at worst—a catalyst for it. There's also considerable evidence that the zero-tolerance policies that beget such high suspension and expulsion rates do little more than increase court referrals for minor misbehavior. They do not make schools safer or more orderly.[6]

> ... As African-American males, **schoolboys** are guilty by associ-ation and—in the view of teachers and administra-tors—always one step away from becoming a **troublemaker**.
>
> Jason Fritz
> University of Pennsylvania
> Teacher Education
> Program

Crime and Punishment

Twenty-five years of research show not just that African Americans are more often disciplined than White students, but that they're more harshly disciplined, too. And yet numerous studies investigating behavior, race, and discipline have yet to show that African-American students misbehave at a significantly higher rate than others, nor that their misbehavior is more serious. That is, no study to date has found differences in racial behavior sufficient to explain racial differences in school punishment.[7]

More and more, researchers are looking to institutional procedures—such as those regarding discipline—to explain the difference. Those procedures, they're finding, are fraught with an alarming degree of subjectivity and act more as a perpetuator of racial order than an objective arbiter of infraction and penalty. Discipline decisions are often colored by adults' perceptions of a student's appearance, neighborhood, family, and social background—all of which influence their perception of his behavior. In fact, in deciding punishment, the individual adult/student encounter often takes a back seat to racial and societal perceptions in general.[8]

And those perceptions, says Ann Arnett Ferguson, are rarely good. In her school-specific study of race and punishment, most of the African-American males were sent to the "punishing room" because of the way they reacted to a confrontation with a teacher or administrator. In many cases, these reactions "involved a bodily display of 'stylized sulking' as a face-saving device... For boys, the display involved hands crossed at the chest, legs spread wide, head down, and gestures such as a desk pushed away." These culturally specific reactions were seen as more disrespectful—and more threatening—than expressions of defiance by students of other races.[9]

Ferguson also offers a reason for these acts of defiance. She says that African-American males "perform their masculinity through dramatic performances and disruptions in class and they make a name for themselves by using fighting as a strategy to recoup their sense of self and to define themselves as creative, powerful, and competent in the face of the degradation they face in school."[10]

Interventions and Alternatives

In-school suspension counteracts many of the more damaging effects of out-of-school suspension in that instructional time continues without interruption and intensive academic help can be provided to students as needed—as can one-on-one personal and behavioral counseling. In-school suspension tends to reduce the daytime juvenile crime rate highly correlated with out-of-school suspensions and yet it has a sufficient punitive aspect—isolation from the regular classroom—to deter infractions. This option still gives administrators the authority to use out-of-school suspensions for more serious offenses and for offenses governed by a school's zero-tolerance policy.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Sometime the best offense is a good defense. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a model in which the school staff adopts and uses positive practices to create and maintain healthy learning environments. The system—which relies on early staff engagement and full staff buy-in—clearly defines school behavior expectations, provides training about the rules and consequences for breaching them, and provides feedback through positive reinforcement and corrective actions. PBIS is intended to improve not just students' learning environment but also their quality of life. MSDE credits PBIS with reducing some participating schools' suspension and office-referral rates by 50 percent and now requires any school with a suspension rate above 18 percent to use PBIS. ∎

Of course, in-school suspension takes time, planning, money—and above all—commitment. Successful programs enjoy a supportive staff and involved parents; shared decision-making during the development phase; a clear mission/philosophy, rules, policies, and procedures; adequate resources and funding (for the physical environment, teaching and counseling staff, instructional materials, and additional student services); continuous program monitoring (ideally by teachers, an administrator, counselor, and social worker); scrupulous record-keeping (including student demographic data, infraction, length of stay, and services provided); a thorough evaluation of program benefits (e.g., behavioral change, reduction in referrals and suspensions); and a documented process for program improvement. In-school suspension works best for periods up to 10 days and for fairly serious offenses.[11]

But it isn't a panacea. While in-school suspension can help resolve students' misbehavior, it doesn't correct specific school conditions that contribute to it. And even more than out-of-school suspension, in-school programs risk becoming a dumping ground—for in-school referrals aren't always counted and reported, making them a great smokescreen for the continued disproportionate removal of African-American males from the regular classroom.

➲ Responsibility: Local school systems

In-school suspension programs, unmonitored and viewed only in terms of the narrow goal of keeping students in the school building, can create an illusion of progress where little exists.

The Way Out: Student Exclusion Practices in Boston Middle Schools

[1] "Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2004," National Center for Education Statistics, 2004

[2] *Suspension, Expulsions, and Health-Related Exclusions: 2004–2005*, Maryland State Department of Education, November 2005

[3] ibid

[4] ibid

[5] *Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline*, Advancement Project and the Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, 2003

[6] ibid

[7] Russell J. Skiba, Robert S. Michael, and Abra Carroll Nardo, *The Color of Discipline*, Indiana Education Policy Center, June 2000

[8] Ann Arnett Ferguson, *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*, University of Michigan Press, 2000

[9] ibid

[10] ibid

[11] Anne Wheelock, "What's Behind the High Suspension Rate," retrieved at http://www.middleweb.com/INCASEiss.html#anchor10787655

[a] The victimization rate for students aged 12–18 generally declined both at school and away from school between 1992 and 2002; this was true for the total crime rate as well as for thefts, serious violent crimes (including rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault), and violent crimes (that is, serious violent crime plus simple assault).

[b] From 2003–04 to 2004–05, suspensions for class-cutting decreased by 37 percent; refusal to obey school policies by 24 percent; tardiness by 15 percent; insubordination by 7 percent; and classroom disruption by 4 percent.

Establish within African-American-majority schools some single-sex classes primarily enrolling students with academic, attendance, and discipline problems.

Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, which significantly relaxes Title IX regulations, the single-sex movement has gained momentum—with good reason. Single-sex classes work. Specifically, they work for historically disadvantaged students—disadvantaged minorities, low- and working-class youth, and non-affluent girls.[1]

With the limits thus defined, single-sex schools and classes consistently show a positive effect on academic outcomes and have proved a viable alternative to the educational settings to which at-risk students—particularly African-American and Hispanic students—are overwhelmingly consigned.[2]

Harvard Medical School child psychologist Alvin Poussaint sees single-sex classes as a much more effective—and much more humane—alternative to warehousing African-American males in special education, a practice that's common today. "Nowadays, schools take a lot of [African-American] boys they can't work with, and they put them in special education," he says. "They kind of give up on them, and we know that after third grade, a lot of [them] start falling behind. So how do you structure the curriculum and activities during the day to make it more appropriate to the issues around Black male children?"[3]

What we're basically saying is that we need to explore a different, more supportive system for African-American males to learn in, because **in the present system they're being destroyed.**

Ken Holt
Principal, Bell Middle School
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

There are many theoretical rationales for the single-sex effect:
- Youth-culture values are diminished in the single-sex classroom.
- Teachers have greater control over the class.
- Single-sex classes are staffed with same-gender teachers who act as role models.
- Sex-based differences in curriculum and leadership opportunities are reduced.
- Gender bias in teacher-student interactions is reduced.
- Sexist behavior in peer interactions is eliminated.
- Enrollment in single-gender classes requires parent and student choice.
- Single-sex classes are generally smaller than co-ed classes.
- Students in single-sex classes are taught a core curriculum with a stronger emphasis on academics, and ability division in these classes is less prevalent, which means all students access the same curriculum.
- Relationships among teachers, parents, and students are typically stronger, which yields a shared-value community focused on academics and equity.
- Teaching and learning tend to be more active and constructivist in single-sex classes.[4]

To those who worry that single-sex classes send a message that African-American males have to be treated differently to get a quality education, proponents of the movement say African-American males are already treated differently—particularly by White teachers. And in classes where gender and racial differences are suppressed—rather than served—it's the African-American male who almost always loses out.

⮞ **Responsibility:** Local school systems

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[1] Rosemary C. Salomone, "Single-Sex Schooling, Law, Policy and Research," *Brookings Papers on Education Policy*, Diane Ravitch, ed., 1999
[2] Ronald Schachter, "The Single-Sex Solution," *District Administration*, April 2003
[3] ibid
[4] Rosemary C. Salomone, op cit

Assign to all high-risk African-American male students an advocate to work through academic and disciplinary problems and provide college and career guidance.

According to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), today's school counselor "help[s] *all* [a] students in the areas of academic achievement, personal/social development, and career development, ensuring today's students become the productive, well-adjusted adults of tomorrow."[1]

Too Many Students, Too Little Time

But given that each counselor is responsible, on average, for 478 students, nearly double what the ASCA recommends, the likelihood of that happening is appallingly low. And the organization knows it. ASCA Spokesperson Amanda Harting admits, "Many counselors will say they don't know half their caseload. We're trying to push them to work with all students, not just the top 5 percent or bottom 5 percent."[2]

Students aren't equally shortchanged on counselor time and attention. Studies show that minority, low-income, and rural students have the least access to guidance and counseling services in their schools.[3]

> Kids will seek relationships—good or bad. They're wired to relate.
>
> David Miller
> LaMarr Shields
> Urban Leadership Institute

And wouldn't you know they're the ones who need them the most. "Poor students and students of color have a greater need than their more advantaged peers for caring and committed adult advocates and mentors in school settings because they often lack family and community members who can adequately fill these roles."[4]

The Question of Quality

When it comes to counseling efficacy, the news is good and bad. On the one hand, research suggests that comprehensive counseling programs positively affect students' social and emotional well-being, academic achievement, and career development. On the other, it shows that poor programs actually pose a serious impediment to student success.[5]

> There's no options if you make a mistake. It's **drop out** or be **put out**. School just isn't set up to handle Black men who bring some issues with them.
>
> High School Student
>
> Mentoring Male Teens in the Hood

While judging program quality is complex, experts who think that counselors' qualities and organizational function need revolutionizing would argue that most programs are pretty poor. They say traditional counselor-education programs teach little about social change, political climates, and school and community power structures. Counselors aren't taught how to instigate or facilitate systemic change, how to advocate effectively, or how to challenge the status quo.[6]

Advocacy for All

And yet this is precisely what our African-American male youth—our most at-risk students—need: Someone who has the will and the background to advocate effectively. Someone who has the power and temerity to challenge the status quo. Someone who has the time and inclination to know his students personally and the ability to get the best from them despite what anyone else thought they had to give.

Young Black men aren't just slipping through the cracks; they're falling down the chasm that separates them from everyone else. For every African-American male in Baltimore City who graduates from high school, one drops out.[7] Obviously, we need a corps of advocates reminding

us every day that a 50-percent failure rate is unacceptable and that these young men—indeed, any young man—is not disposable.

➲ **Responsibility:** Maryland State Department of Education, local school systems, Maryland Business Roundtable for Education

[1] "Role of the School Counselor," American School Counselor Association, © 2005, retrieved at http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?pl=327&sl=341&contentid=341

[2] William Croyle, "Many Students, Little Time," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, September 11, 2005

[3] Reese M. House and Richard L. Hayes, "School Counselors: Becoming Key Players in School Reform," *Professional School Counseling*, April 2002

[4] ibid

[5] ibid

[6] Reese M. House and Susan Jones Sears, "Preparing School Counselors to Be Leaders and Advocates: A Critical Need in the New Millennium, *Theory Into Practice*, Summer 2002

[7] *2005 Maryland Report Card*, Maryland State Department of Education, 2005

[a] emphasis theirs

Sometimes we need people to listen—just **listen**—to what we have to **say**.

Family and community support

Fund and provide direction for programs in which one-on-one and group mentoring is provided to African-American males. Focus mentor recruitment efforts on African-American men.

While mentoring became popular in the mid-1980s, the formal matching of adult volunteers to at-risk youth actually began in 1904 with what is now Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS). More than 90 years after its founding, BBBS completed the largest study of the mentoring effect.[a] And the results were good.

The Academic Effect

Mentored youth (Little Brothers and Little Sisters) were 46 percent less likely than those not mentored to begin using drugs during the study period;[b] 27 percent less likely to begin using alcohol; and nearly one-third less likely to hit someone. Little Brothers and Little Sisters skipped half as many days of school, felt more competent about doing schoolwork, and had modest gains in their grade-point averages.[c] Parent and peer relationships were better for mentored youth—peer relationships especially so for minority boys. The researchers found no statistically significant improvement in self-concept, even though many consider this one of the primary benefits of mentoring.[1]

But what most surprised study authors was the academic benefit, as non-instructional interventions are uneven when it comes to influencing school performance. In fact, BBBS doesn't target—or even address—any of the problems it ameliorates. That the provision of a caring, adult relationship <u>alone</u> affects children in socially and academically important ways has implications for youth policy and programming in general.[2]

All Mentoring Is Not Created Equal

Merely hitching adults to kids, without adequate infrastructure, may create a sense of action, but is likely to accomplish little. It may even backfire. If a relationship engenders hurt or reinforces negative stereotypes, it is worse than no mentoring at all.

    Marc Freedman
    Founder, Civic
    Ventures

While the well-controlled BBBS study was encouraging, others are less so. Researchers attribute this, in general, to two things: inferior studies and inferior programs. The studies: Most are compromised, as they rely on self-reported data, non-random group assignment, and instruments with limited reliability and validity. Because most mentoring programs are funded through donations, well-run studies typically exceed their budgets.[3]

The programs: One thing mentoring studies do reliably confirm is that the less frequent and intense the interaction between mentor and mentee, the less effective the mentoring.[4] In contrast to BBBS's tight delivery system—intensive volunteer and youth screening, thorough training, close supervision, and explicit matching and meeting requirements—many other programs are less structured, largely because meager funding and a reliance on volunteer mentors demand it. In this *laissez faire* atmosphere, the interactions are predictably haphazard: A study of six mentoring programs serving a population similar to that of BBBS found that only 57 percent of the mentors met with their mentees on a somewhat regular basis.[5]

Matching Mentors: The Question of Race

While studies suggest that race does not play a significant role in determining whether a mentor and mentee form a strong relationship and the extent to which that relationship leads to positive change,[d] many support racial matching nonetheless. Same-race mentors can more easily understand their mentees'

challenges, they say, and can reinforce their shared cultural identity. Plus, even well-intentioned people show bias, even good people stereotype—things a same-race relationship would substantially inhibit.[6]

This Task Force agrees that same-race mentoring is ideal for African-American male youth. That's why we recommend targeting recruitment efforts to African-American men. However, we also acknowledge that a mentor's qualities and interpersonal skill—not his race—will prove most critical to building a supportive, trusting relationship.

Maryland Mentoring Partnership

The Maryland Mentoring Partnership (MMP) was formed in 1997 to provide leadership, resources, and technical assistance to mentoring programs throughout the state. Linked with 38 local and state mentoring providers, MMP improves provider collaboration and resource use, which ultimately increases the number of youth served. By helping local organizations access research, training, and replicable models, MMP also improves program quality.

In 2004, MMP served 33,000 youth and trained more than 1,600 mentors. The organization averages 1,500 new relationships each year. But there remains a significant gap between youth needing mentors and the number of people making that commitment. MMP's 2007 goal is to have 84,000 Maryland youth in mentoring relationships—a 155 percent increase.

In FY 2004, MMP received $662,000 from private and public sources and spent slightly more than that on personnel, activities, scholarships, and administration. ∎

But, above all, this Task Force is practical. If we commit exclusively to same-race matches, those most in need of mentors—Black male youth—will wait the longest for them.[7] Certainly, matching African-American boys with non-Black volunteers is better than never matching them at all.

Cost and Compromise

There are two obvious hurdles to large-scale mentoring in Maryland: sufficient mentors and sufficient money. It's why we'd be well-served to formally link our efforts with those of the Maryland Mentoring Partnership (see box), whose cornerstone activities are mentor recruitment, training, resource development, and public awareness.[8]

The average cost of a well-run mentoring program is $1,000 per child, per year.[9] With 233,000 African-American males in Maryland aged 5–22,[10] we're talking about a program cost approaching $233 million.

Obviously, then, it makes sense to establish priority criteria—such as age,[e] family income, academic performance, and behavior—when making mentor matches. It also makes sense to consider group (in addition to one-on-one) mentoring to expand our reach to as many children as possible.[f]

➲ Responsibility: Maryland General Assembly, Maryland State Department of Education

1 Joseph P. Tierney and Jean Baldwin Grossman, *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*, Public/Private Ventures, September 2000
2 ibid
3 Lisa M. Keating, Michelle A. Tomishima, Sharon Foster, and Michael Alessandri, "The Effects of a Mentoring Program on At-Risk Youth," *Adolescence*, Winter 2002
4 ibid
5 Joseph P. Tierney and Jean Baldwin Grossman, op cit
6 *Same-Race and Cross-Race Matching*, Public/Private Ventures, Northwest Regional Educational Publishing, May 2002
7 ibid
8 *Maryland Mentoring Partnership Annual Report*, 2004, retrieved at http://www.marylandmentors.org/annual_report/annual rpt/MentorAnRprt2CInside.pdf

[9] Lisa M. Keating, et al, op cit

[10] "Total Population Estimates by Age, Race, and Gender for Maryland," Maryland State Data Center, July 1, 2004

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[a] Big Brothers Big Sisters uses just one at-risk characteristic for program participation: single-parent household. However, many of the youths in the BBBS study were economically disadvantaged, as well; more than 40 percent received food stamps and/or cash public assistance. Minority boys made up 34 percent of study participants. All BBBS matches are same-sex; they are not all same-race.

[b] This effect was most pronounced among minority youth.

[c] The academic benefit was strongest for minority girls.

[d] Minor differences appeared in outcomes for boys and girls matched with same-race versus cross-race mentors, but those differences did not suggest a pattern.

[e] Most mentoring programs focus on young adolescents, as this is typically when children start engaging in risky behavior and when mentoring shows the greatest capacity to mitigate it.

[f] One-on-one mentoring has the most research support for its effectiveness; however, many researchers offer that group mentoring could serve a complementary function by drawing more volunteers and youth into the process.

Provide educational materials to young African-American fathers and their children.

"Biologically speaking, the link between mother and child is incontrovertible. Fatherhood, in contrast, is inherently uncertain, which is why societies have tried so hard to connect children to their fathers."[1]

Father Absence

The nearly universal understanding of marriage as an indispensable social institution that binds men to their families is breaking down. "The set of social expectations, codes, and laws that once kept most fathers connected to their families is loosening, and fathers … are increasingly disengaging from their children and from the mothers of their children."[2]

Father absence isn't exclusive to the Black community, but it has had a particularly devastating effect there. Forty-two percent of African-American adults are married, compared to 61 percent of Whites. Nearly seven in ten African-American children are born to unmarried women, compared to three in ten White children. Sixty-two percent of all African-American households are headed by a single parent, compared to 27 percent of White households.[3] And of the 4.5 million U.S. children residing in predominantly fatherless neighborhoods, nearly 80 percent are African American.[4][a]

Father Hunger

The effect of this "radical fatherlessness" on Black male youth is especially poignant. "Boys and young men … without the protection and guidance of fathers, struggle each day to figure out what it means to be a man [and improvise] for themselves expedient— and too often violent and self-destructive—codes of manhood."[5]

While we may not be able to immediately influence the social, economic, and cultural forces keeping African-American men from their homes,[b] we can consistently and specifically appeal to them—those in the home and outside of it—to be present in their children's lives. We can encourage them to spend time with their children, to talk to them and read to them. We can show them how to help their children developmentally and academically. And we can provide them the resources they need to do it.

We can show them that African-American fathers have value and—when engaged with their children—more power over the health of the African-American community than anyone else.

We suggest using faith organizations as distribution centers because of their urban prevalence and their history of spiritual leadership and practical partnership in struggles past: slave revolts, the Underground Railroad, abolition, the Civil Rights movement. Many say the Black church has been successful in delivering services and support to African-American women and children, but has fallen far short in engaging African-American men. Churches, they say, must be at the forefront of family renewal—an impossible task without deliberate outreach to the constituency they're least likely to find in their pews: young African-American fathers.[6]

We suggest using public libraries, again, because of their prevalence, and because, more than any other institution, they serve the dual aims of educational access and community cohesion.

And, finally, we suggest using Baltimore's Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History and Culture because its mission complements our own and because the two

Are black fathers necessary? Damn straight we are.
William Raspberry
Morehouse Conference on African-American Fathers

When fathers are absent, children suffer—one child at a time, one family at a time. And that suffering reverberates throughout our society.
Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America

values the museum so proudly celebrates—freedom and self-determination—are ultimately unobtainable without an adequate education.

➲ Responsibility: Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Advisory Council on Libraries, faith-based organizations

[1] Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Cornel West, *The War Against Parents: What We Can Do For America's Beleaguered Moms and Dads*, Houghton Mifflin, 1998

[2] *Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America*, Morehouse Research Institute and Institute for American Values, 1999

[3] "African American Healthy Marriage Initiative," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, July 8, 2005

[4] *Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America,* op cit

[5] ibid

[6] Bernard Franklin, "A Challenge to Urban Churches," The National Center for Fathering, © 1990–2003, retrieved at http://www.fathers.com/urban/artf03articles.htm,

[a] As a nation arguably less concerned with obligation than individualism, we've largely ignored the two-parent effect. But the evidence is clear: Controlling for race, income, and education, children living with one parent are worse off than those living with two. They're sicker and poorer. They're more likely to commit a crime and to be the victim of one. They do worse in school and are significantly more likely to drop out of it. (Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, *Growing up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps*, Harvard University Press, 1994)

[b] though the recommendations in this report should have the collateral effect of doing just that

Encourage certain ex-offenders convicted of non-violent felonies to volunteer in their communities.

A child's education isn't contained to the classroom, and his teachers aren't the only ones instructing him. The lessons he learns on the street can easily trump those he learns in school.

That's why reconnecting African-American men to their communities is so important. And given the scope of African-American incarceration, the men most in need of reconnecting are ex-inmates returning to the neighborhoods they left months or years earlier.

Building an Unconventional—and Uncompromised—Community

On the one hand, Maryland releases about 10,000 people each year from state prisons—most of them African-American men.[1][a] On the other, we send 170,000 African-American boys to school—many of them leaving homes without a Black man in sight and entering classrooms just as devoid of them. Maybe it's counterintuitive to put children and ex-offenders together. And maybe it's exactly what each one needs. Life's lessons aren't always learned from those who lived it flawlessly.

Activist Malcolm X, actor Charles Dutton, and the Reverend William Stanfield—all were once incarcerated, and all are potent examples of the positive influence ex-offenders can have on African-American male youth tempted to make their same mistakes.[b] There is nothing quite so credible as experience, and those who have it will, more effortlessly than others, earn children's ears.

The Task Force recognizes that this recommendation is controversial. And members agree that not all non-violent felons belong in volunteer positions. (For instance, many voiced concern over the prospect of convicted drug dealers in close company with children.) Obviously, the Task Force proposes strict eligibility restrictions, extensive background checks, and close and continued monitoring.

⮊ **Responsibility:** Community and faith-based organizations

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[1] Nancy G. La Vigne and Vera Kachnowski, *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland*, Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center, 2003

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[a] Seventy-six percent of the prisoners released each year in Maryland are African American; more than 90 percent are men.

[b] Of course, the benefits work both ways, in that ex-offenders who make healthy attachments to their communities and to mainstream life substantially decrease their likelihood of re-engaging in criminal behavior.

Character, not circumstance, makes the **person**.

Booker T. Washington

Fifty years ago, desegregation
seemed important and good, but
**everything Thurgood Marshall
fought for is destroying us.**

Student
Harbor City Learning Center

Prevention and intervention services

Provide high-quality early care and education to all children.

Even as Maryland celebrated another increase in the percentage of children entering school ready to learn,[a] the yawning readiness gap between White and African-American students remains. Just 52 percent of African-American children were fully prepared to enter kindergarten in 2005–06, compared with 69 percent of White children. While the struggle is evident in every area assessed, perhaps none is as poignant—and potentially devastating—as the Language & Literacy domain, where only 44 percent of African-American children were rated fully ready for school, versus 58 percent of White children.[1][b]

Maryland's school readiness data isn't disaggregated by race and gender together, but one can be confident that our numbers—like the nation's—are even worse for African-American males. Overall, 66 percent of Maryland's girls were fully ready for kindergarten, compared with only 55 percent of boys.[2]

National data back up the readiness gap and offer some explanations for it. Overall, African-American children enter school with fewer of the precursor skills that beget fluent reading. Specifically, they're less able to recognize letters and distinguish beginning and ending sounds. While all children make substantial progress during their kindergarten year, it seems the initial lag is just too large for African-American boys to overcome completely. After a year in kindergarten, 17 percent of White girls, 13 percent of White boys, 9 percent of African-American girls, and just 7 percent of African-American boys can read.[3]

Early Learning: Science and Substance

More troubling than these figures alone is the fact that neurological development practically guarantees that children who start out behind will stay behind. Early experiences have a dramatic and specific impact on subsequent development—not merely influencing the general direction of cognitive growth, but actually affecting how the intricate circuitry of the brain is wired. That's because the majority of brain synapses is produced during the first three years of life. Those activated often through repeated early experiences will likely be permanent, and those used less frequently, eliminated.[4]

> Brain development is much more vulnerable to environmental influences than we ever suspected, especially in the earliest years.
>
> *Carnegie Report on Meeting the Needs of Young Children*

Therefore, the achievement gap we see during children's earliest years is strikingly predictive of the gap we'll see throughout their schooling. In fact, most researchers say the conversation about closing the gap is a non-starter without a prescriptive and comprehensive early-education plan.

Race and Readiness

We make the case for providing all children high-quality early care and education because the readiness gap is not a factor of socioeconomic status. That is, while poverty certainly predicts poor reading achievement, it doesn't predict a reading gap. The gap between more affluent White and African-American kindergarteners is actually larger than it is between their poorer counterparts.[5] Also, when all children learn together, all children are more successful—the more able children actually help the others learn. And finally, targeting preK programs to at-risk youngsters tends to create separate and decidedly unequal programs for lower, middle, and upper income children.[6]

Certainly, universal access to high-quality preschool programs is among the most promising practices for closing the readiness gap. Maryland's Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act requires that, by 2007–08, preK be made available to all disadvantaged 4-year-olds. And other states are following suit: In 2005, 20 governors proposed funding increases to their states' preK programs.[7]

However, researchers concede that no matter how effective preK programs are, children's success or failure will continue to be significantly influenced by what happens to them—and for them—at home. This is where earlier programs, focused not only on supporting the child but supporting his family, too, will prove critical.

Fund a Judy Center for every elementary school where there is a documented gap between African-American and White achievement.

In 2001, Maryland established Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers (Judy Centers) to improve school readiness among all children; to close skill gaps between disadvantaged children and their wealthier classmates; to improve families' access to an array of support services; and to formalize community-wide collaboration. Twenty-four centers in 21 school systems now offer integrated full-day, full-year programs serving about 8,000 children, birth–6, and their families. The State Department of Education provides $7.6 million in Judy Center funding each year.

A 2001–2003 evaluation of the centers found that they improved parents' access to early childhood, health, and family-support services; that they increased professional credentials among preK and kindergarten teachers and early childhood staff; and, most importantly, that they helped low-income children, children learning English, and those in special education catch up to their peers by the end of their kindergarten year.[8]

⮑ **Responsibility:** Maryland State Department of Education, Governor's Office of Children, early-care affinity groups (e.g., Maryland Committee for Children, Ready at Five)

Office of Child Care

In July 2005, with the passage of HB 932, responsibilities residing with the Department of Human Resources' Child Care Administration were, in part, transferred to MSDE. Now in MSDE's Division of Early Childhood Development, the Office of Child Care licenses and monitors child care centers and family child care providers, issues contracts and grants to providers to improve early-care quality, and administers the state's Child Care Credentialing System. The move is designed to help MSDE provide a single governance structure for early education programs, better coordinate programs and resources, and offer more training and support for child care providers. ■

One of the foremost challenges faced by early childhood programs is that they're spread among different state agencies, rather than residing in a single agency that has as its core mission the continuum of learning—from birth through high school.   —HB 932

Ensure that all early childhood programs— including Head Start, child care centers, family child care, and pre-kindergarten programs— provide a strong focus on emergent literacy.

Emergent literacy describes the reading and writing concepts—phonemic awareness, letter recognition, print conventions, story structure, language/vocabulary development, etc.—that precede and develop into conventional literacy. Strategies proven to promote emergent literacy include storybook and "interactive" reading, focused one-on-one verbal interaction, vocabulary development, and print-rich environments.[9]

These strategies are especially important for children in poverty, whose homes are less likely to nurture emergent literacy. For instance, by the time their child turns 3, upper income parents speak about 35 million words to him, middle-income parents speak about 20 million words, and lower income parents speak about 10 million words. Not only is there a striking disparity in the total number of words spoken, but also in the number of different vocabulary words used. The result? By 18–20 months, the vocabulary growth trajectory of the children of upper income parents has already accelerated beyond that of other children.

Given that preschool vocabulary knowledge is a strong predictor of reading performance in early elementary school, and early elementary reading performance is a strong predictor of later school performance generally, success looms distant for the low-income child.[10]

Our success in this goal will predict our success in every other one. For the research indicates that children attending high-quality early education programs are more likely than non-attenders to succeed in school. They're less likely to be identified for special education, less likely to be held back, more likely to graduate, and more likely to be employed.[11][c] The inverse, quite simply, is this: If we don't take advantage of the fact that young children are biologically primed for learning, we will consign them to years of academic struggle. If we fail African-American males early, we fail them. Period.

➲ Responsibility: Maryland State Department of Education, Governor's Office for Children, early-care affinity groups

[1]   *Children Entering School Ready to Learn*, Maryland State Department of Education, April 2006

[2]   ibid

[3]   Oscar A. Barbarin, "The Black-White Achievement Gap in Early Reading Skills: Familial and Socio-cultural Context," *Love to Read*, Barbara Bowman, ed., National Black Child Development Institute, 2002

[4]   "How are the Children?" U.S. Department of Education, 1999

[5]   Oscar A. Barbarin, op cit

[6]   "Why All Children Benefit from PreK," Pew Charitable Trusts, June 2005

[7]   "Pre-K Now Leadership Report Shows More Governors Than Ever Propose Increased Investments to Pre-Kindergarten; Southern Governors Lead Nation but Other Regions Gaining Strength," PreK Now, Pew Charitable Trusts, April 21, 2005

[8]   "Judy P. Hoyer Early Care and Education Enhancement Program Proven to Be Successful," *Judy Center Partnerships*, Maryland State Department of Education, January/February 2004

[9]   Barbara K. Gunn, Deborah C. Simmons, and Edward J. Kameenui, "Emergent Literacy: Synthesis of the Research," National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators, University of Oregon, 1995

[10] George Farkas, "The Black-White Test Score Gap," *Contexts*, American Sociological Association, Spring 2004

[11] G. Reid Lyon, "Using Assessment and Accountability to Raise Student Achievement," Testimony before the Subcommittee on Education Reform, Committee on Education and the Workforce, U.S. House of Representatives, March 8, 2001

[a]   When MSDE first collected statewide readiness data in 2001–02, 49 percent of children entering kindergarten were fully prepared for school. That proportion has grown each year since, so that in 2005–06, 60 percent of children entering school were considered "fully ready" for the kindergarten curriculum. Over that same time, the share of African-American children fully ready for school increased 15 percent—from 37 to 52 percent of entering kindergarteners.

[b]   Fifty-five percent of African-American children were rated fully ready for kindergarten in the Social and Personal domain (vs. 69 percent of White kindergarteners); 46 percent were ready in Mathematical Thinking (vs. 65 percent); 29 percent were ready in Scientific Thinking (vs. 47 percent); 37 percent were ready in Social Studies (vs. 56 percent); 60 percent were ready in The Arts (vs. 68 percent); and 68 percent were ready in Physical Development (vs. 78 percent).

[c]   In his proposed FY 2007 budget, Governor Ehrlich includes an additional $750,000 for the Maryland Child Care Resource and Referral Network. The Network helps parents locate and evaluate child care and provides training for current and prospective child care providers and for employers concerned about their employees' child care needs.

In areas of high need, provide the physical, dental, and mental health services needed to support greater academic achievement.

Not only are African-American boys more likely than other children to suffer from common and chronic health problems that impair cognition and behavior, they're less likely to receive treatment for them. Janet Curry, UCLA professor of economics, attributes about a quarter of the gap in school readiness to racial differences in health conditions and maternal health and behavior.[1]

The Picture of Health

For instance, the prevalence of "clinically significant" attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) [a]—which increases disruptive behavior, interferes with the ability to follow instructions and complete basic tasks, and is linked with cognitive impairment—is highest among African-American boys (5.7 percent). It should be at least mildly surprising, then, that a survey of parents of high-risk children found that 51 percent of the White children had been evaluated for ADHD, while only 28 percent of the African-American children had. Of those evaluated, 31 percent of the White children—versus just 15 percent of the African-American children—received treatment.[2]

Asthma[b]—the most common chronic condition among children and the leading cause of trips to the emergency room, of hospitalization, and of absenteeism—is also more common among African-American children (15.7 percent) than White children (12.2 percent). But the "consequence gap" is even bigger. Between 1998 and 1999, 5.7 percent of African-American children under 18—versus just 1.6 percent of White children—had been hospitalized for asthma. So either African-American children's asthma is much more serious than White children's or it's much less likely to be controlled.[3]

> Each year, financial, geographic, and cultural barriers deny 8.4 million children access to consistent, high-quality health care. Fifty-five percent of these uninsured children went an entire year without regular, preventive care; 42 percent went one year without any medical care at all.
>
> Urban Institute, 2003

Tragically, the list goes on. Twice as many African-American children as White children are iron deficient.[4] African-American children—and boys in particular—are more likely to have elevated blood-lead levels.[5][c] They're 2½ times more likely to suffer untreated tooth decay.[6] They're less likely to received needed mental health care and when they do, it's usually poorer quality.[7] What do African-American children suffer as a result? Chronic pain, impaired immune function, aggressive behavior, depression, anxiety, poor cognitive functioning, excessive restricted-activity days, sluggish metabolism, and slurred speech.

Obviously, there is an inextricable link between a child's physical, emotional, and mental health and his or her academic success. Given that our African-American male students are so physically imperiled, schools must help level the playing field in terms of student health and well-being.

Expand Maryland's School-Based Health Centers.

One way to do so is to expand Maryland's school-based health centers (SBHCs). Sixty-one SBHCs—enrolling roughly 31,000 students and logging 84,000 visits in 2004–05[d]—have opened in low-income, high-risk communities. They provide medical, dental, and mental[e] health care; prevention programs; health education; and associated social services.[8]

The Maryland State Department of Education distributes more than $2 million a year to SBHCs in ongoing grant support, an amount supplemented by funds and in-kind contributions from the federal government, local health departments, schools and school systems, private health care organizations, and public and private insurers.[9] With this kind of collaboration and endorsement, surely we could secure additional funds to serve the thousands more high-need children who so desperately need our help.[f]

Expand the Maryland Meals for Achievement Program.

In Maryland, 27 percent of urban 4th-graders skip breakfast three or more times a week.[10] That's a significant problem because the health and academic benefits of breakfast in general—and school-provided breakfast, in particular—are well-documented. Children who eat breakfast are less likely to be overweight.[11] They're less apt to make mistakes, more able to distinguish among similar objects, and have quicker recall. Children who eat a school-provided breakfast score higher on standardized tests; earn higher grades in reading and math; work faster, especially on math- and number-related tasks; are absent and late for school less often; exhibit fewer behavioral, discipline, and psychological problems; have longer attention spans; and visit the nurse's office less frequently.[12]

No One Pays to Eat

The Maryland Meals for Achievement Program (MMFA) provides <u>all</u> children a daily, in-classroom breakfast—regardless of family income. Researchers from Harvard University credit the program with improving students' behavior, academic performance, and well-being.[13] [g]

While the bulk of the program is paid for with federal money, state funds help cover the cost of providing a free breakfast to children who would otherwise pay the partial or full amount. The all-student, in-classroom aspects of the program are important, for they reduce the stigma associated with free-meals programs and dramatically increase low-income students' participation in them. That is, students eligible for a free breakfast anyway are more likely to eat it if it's served in the classroom and if their wealthier classmates eat it, too.[h] Statewide, just 12 percent of students routinely eat school breakfast—even though 33 percent could do so at little or no cost. In MMFA schools, nearly three out of every four students eat a free morning meal.[14]

What a Good Meal Costs

The $1.93 million allocated to MMFA in FY 2006 funded 129 of the 182 schools that applied to the program. Funding all 182 applicants would cost $2.95 million. And funding all 591 schools that <u>could</u> apply—schools in which at least 40 percent of students qualify for free and reduced-price meals—would cost $11 million.[i]

There's a reason for the considerable gap between the number of schools eligible for funds and the number applying for them. MSDE doesn't advertise MMFA. With schools already being turned away, marketing the program better without funding it better would simply mean more refusals. On the other hand, with more money would come more advertising and, in turn, more applicants.

Plus, with more state money comes more federal money. Because MMFA is part of the School Breakfast Program, the federal government reimburses school systems per meal served.[j] In FY 2004, school systems received $4.5 million in MMFA-linked federal reimbursement.[k] In MMFA schools, federal reimbursement increased 600 percent.[15]

While state regulations require that MMFA serve socioeconomically[i] and geographically diverse schools, the program captures those students most in need. Of the 48,000 students currently served by MMFA, about 12,000—or 25 percent—are African-American boys. If every school that applied for MMFA funds got them, the state would feed another 6,000.

MMFA is a proven program, one whose documented returns—financial, physical, and academic—clearly warrant the investment.

⮡ Responsibility: Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Governor's Office for Children

[1] Janet Curry, "Health Disparities and Gaps in School Readiness," *The Future of Children*, Spring 2005

[2] ibid

[3] ibid

[4] ibid

[5] ibid

[6] B.L. Edelstein, "Disparities in Oral Health and Access to Care: Findings of National Surveys," *Ambulatory Pediatrics*, March 2002

[7] "Children's Mental Health Needs, Disparities and School-Based Services: A Fact Sheet," The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools, © 2001–2005, retrieved at http://www.healthinschools.org/cfk/mentfact.asp

[8] Donna Behrens, RN, MPH, "Maryland's School-Based Health Care at a Glance," Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care, 2004–2005

[9] ibid

[10] S. Gross, Y. Bronner, C. Welch, et al, *"*Breakfast and Lunch Meal Skipping Patterns Among Fourth-Grade Children From Selected Public Schools in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Maryland," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association,* March 2003

[11] "Pediatric Overweight: A Review of the Literature," Center on Weight & Health, June 2001

[12] "Breakfast for Learning," Food Research & Action Center, retrieved at http://www.frac.org/pdf/breakfastforlearning.PDF

[13] J.M. Murphy, et al, "Maryland Meals for Achievement Year III Final Report," October 2001

[14] "Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Enhancement Proposal Request," Maryland State Department of Education, 2006

[15] ibid

[a] ADHD Children with ADHD not only perform worse than children without the disorder on cognitive tests, they're also at greater risk of having to repeat a grade and to enroll in special education, even after controlling for a wide range of potential confounders. ADHD affects cognition and behavior more than other chronic health conditions, such as asthma, or poor health generally. Estimates suggest that children with ADHD score at least a quarter of a standard deviation lower on standardized tests of mathematics and reading than other children.

[b] Asthma Several studies indicate that children with asthma are more likely than other children to have behavior problems, even when the asthma is controlled. One study found that asthmatic children scored between two-thirds to one standard deviation below the normative value on a test of impulse control, while another found that asthma doubled the risk of behavioral problems. One large population-based study found that asthma affected school absences, the probability of having learning disabilities, and grade repetition. Asthmatic children in grades 1–12 were absent from school an average of 7.6 days a year vs. 2.5 days for well children. Nine percent of the asthmatic children (5 percent of the well children) had learning disabilities; 18 percent (15 percent of the well children) repeated a grade.

[c] Elevated Blood Lead Sixty percent of children aged 1–5 with confirmed elevated blood-lead levels between 1997 and 2001 were African American. In 2001, 2 percent of White children and 8.7 percent of African-American children had confirmed high blood-lead levels. Although some studies have found that increasing blood-lead levels from 10 to 20 microg/dl reduces IQ scores by as much as 7 points (where one standard deviation is about 15 points), two reviews of many studies of blood-lead levels conclude that such an increase would reduce IQ by about 2 points. Elevated lead levels have also been linked to hyperactivity and behavior problems.

[d] SBHC breakdown: 22 elementary schools, 13 middle schools, 19 high schools, and 7 other schools, operating in 11 school systems. The 31,000 students enrolled represent 59 percent of the schools' total enrollment. Medical care visits: 54,849; Mental health visits: 23,971; Oral health visits: 4,516; Other: 731.

[e] Forty-five health centers—75 percent—offer mental health services. Mental health services accounted for 44 percent of all SBHC visits in 2004–05.

[f] In his proposed FY 2007 budget, Governor Ehrlich includes $700,000 in additional SBHC funding.

[g] Researchers documented an 8-percent decrease in tardiness; a 36-percent decline in suspensions; and a 5-percentage-point gain in the number of students scoring at or above satisfactory on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program. (Comparison schools experienced a slight decline in the number of students scoring at or above the satisfactory level.) Teachers reported fewer complaints of hunger, fewer headaches and stomachaches, longer attention spans, less disruption, and better behavior. Students reported that they were strongly in favor of the program.

[h] Research conducted in Baltimore City found that schools offering <u>cafeteria-based</u> universal free breakfast saw only a 5-percent participation increase. In schools offering <u>classroom-based</u> universal free breakfast, participation tripled.

[i] In his proposed FY 2007 budget, Governor Ehrlich includes $1.2 million in additional MMFA funding. This increase would put MMFA funding at $3.1 million, which would serve 27,000 more students—for a total of 75,000 students.

[j] In 2005–06, the federal reimbursement rate was 23¢–$1.51.

[k] The $1.2 million in additional MMFA funds included in Governor Ehrlich's proposed FY 2007 budget would generate $2.8 million in additional federal reimbursement.

[l] To qualify for MMFA participation, at least 40 percent of a school's students must be eligible for free and reduced-price meals. The poverty threshold was set relatively low, because low-income students in comparatively wealthy schools are typically less likely to take advantage of free meals than students in poor schools.

Increase funding for correctional education programs so that every resident receives the academic and occupational services he needs to transition back into his school and community.

Where the Black Men Are

If we're serious about educating African-American males, we have to go where they are to do it. In Maryland, that increasingly means to prison: For every four Black men in college, there are three behind bars.[1][2][3]

With African Americans incarcerated at seven times the rate of Whites,[4] more and more Black men are leaving their neighborhoods for a cellblock.[a] Statewide, nearly one in ten African-American men, aged 20–30, is in custody on any given day, and three in ten are in prison, in jail, on probation, or on parole.[5] In Baltimore City, where one in five young Black men is in prison and more than half are under some form of criminal justice control,[6] the African-American family and community have been decimated.

To a large extent, the money goes with the men: Per capita spending on corrections jumped 66 percent between 1990 and 1999. Maryland now spends $22,000–$24,000 a year on each prisoner,[7] but just over $9,000 on each student.[8][b] Unfortunately, the money used to incarcerate Black men rarely stretches far enough to educate them.

Education and Incarceration

On a daily basis, we'll provide educational services to fewer than 5,000 of the 24,000 inmates housed in Maryland's correctional facilities—more than 13,000 of whom are legally entitled to services.[9][c] At any given time, there are about 1,800 inmates on a waiting list for educational programs.

Our anemic 20-percent enrollment rate is especially grim because most inmates read on a 6th- to 8th-grade level (well below functional literacy); less than half have a high school diploma or GED; and most have no job—or even job skills—at the time of their arrest.[10]

It's regrettable, too, because, by all accounts, Maryland's correctional education program is a good one: Maryland exceeded three—and met three—of the seven program-quality standards established by the Education Coordinating Council for Correctional Institutions.[11][d] Another indication of program quality is the fact that inmates who do receive services rarely opt out of them; In FY 2005, the drop-out rate was a negligible 1.58 percent.[12]

In FY 2005, 857 inmates received their high school diploma, 918 completed occupational training (a 9-percent increase over FY 2004), 346 passed basic literacy tests (a 7-percent increase), and 1,253 completed adult literacy and life skills training. The GED pass rate was 64.5 percent[13]—Maryland's pass rate among all test-takers is less than 60 percent[14]—and program attendance was 96 percent.[15] Nearly 2,900 students received pre-employment/transition services—28 percent more than did in FY 2004—and the Occupational Skills Training Center placed about 77 percent of its graduates into the fields for which they trained,[16] a number that officials say could still grow considerably if they had job developers in every region.

> **Fathers** who are in prisons and jails are not just convicts. They are **parents,** too.
>
> Dr. Creasie Finney Hairston
> University of Illinois-Chicago

Following the Money

Imagine, then, what we could do with sufficient funding. Maryland's adult correctional education budget—in FY 06, $19.9 million—has remained largely unchanged over the past few years—and so has the number of inmates on the waiting list. A 10-year, 54-percent growth in the inmate population has been met with a paltry 4-percent growth in correctional education positions.[17]

Hope blossomed in 2003, when the General Assembly allocated $2 million to hire an additional 30 correctional educational teachers. That hope was dashed when the budget was cut and the positions (plus three) eliminated before they could have any effect on the inmates served. Officials estimate they need 43 more instructors to wipe out the waiting list.[e]

The unwillingness to staff and fund correctional education sufficiently makes little sense—especially if one is "tough on crime." Ninety-five percent of all inmates will eventually be released—6 in 10 to Baltimore City alone.[18] With most of them no better off academically than when they were sentenced, the majority will commit new crimes within three years.[f]

According to the Justice Policy Institute, Maryland's wholesale removal of African-American men from their communities has done little to reduce the crime there, and in some instances, has had the opposite effect—for large-scale incarceration ultimately undermines the stability communities need to keep crime down. Examining certain Baltimore neighborhoods with high and persistent levels of violence, researchers found that local crime rose even as the number of youth living there declined.[19]

Crime Control

Clearly, correctional education works better. A recidivism study involving Maryland, Ohio, and Minnesota shows that simply attending school behind bars reduces the likelihood of reincarceration by 29 percent.[g] And, fiscally, correctional education is sound: Every dollar spent on it returns more than two dollars in slashed prison costs.[20] In fact, correctional education is almost twice as cost-effective as more traditional crime control. One million dollars spent on prison education prevents about 600 crimes, while that same money invested in expanded incarceration prevents 350.[21]

But it's the less direct savings that are perhaps even more compelling: About 65 percent of the recidivism study's participants have children, nearly half are responsible for their children's financial support, and 83 percent of their families receive public assistance.[22] Returning African-American men to their homes, where they can care for their children—financially and emotionally—is our best hope for curing this endemic problem.

There's a reason many of Maryland's inmates have an immediate family member who's been in prison. Legions of children disconnected from their fathers—lacking support, discipline, encouragement, and hope—are making their very same mistakes.[h] That's why this problem is so intractable and the costs—financial, social, and emotional—incalculable. Breaking this cycle of incarceration, once and for all, will finally make up the ground we've so willingly ceded all these years.

Juvenile Offenders

On the first day of the 2003 legislative session, Governor Ehrlich's plan to migrate educational programs in the state's juvenile facilities to MSDE was set in motion. HB 860 was introduced, calling for MSDE to assume responsibility for the education program at the Charles H. Hickey, Jr. School—a move that would mark the Department's first foray into juvenile correctional education.

By 2004, MSDE's mission had expanded considerably. The agency was directed to take over all 13 schools operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) by 2012, and provide

residents middle and high school academic programs, pre-GED and GED preparation, intensive reading and math instruction, special education services, career exploration and occupational education, and life skills training.

MSDE has already assumed operation of the education program at the Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center and the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center. While Hickey's Pratt School and Thurgood Marshall Academy are now closed, MSDE continues to run the education program for detention youth remaining there.[i] MSDE and DJS are working on a transition timeline for the remaining programs.[j]

Together, the two agencies are developing operational policies and standards for juvenile correctional education, and staff meet regularly to guide work in special education, instruction, staff development, and transition services.

MSDE has committed to providing residents six hours of rigorous instruction every day. The biggest challenge facing MSDE is reconstructing the decaying buildings in which this instruction will take place—for it's difficult to imagine remaining in these rooms for six hours at a time, much less learning in them. The facilities are woefully inadequate—both in space and condition. Rooms designed to hold 100 students routinely hold double that, even in the newer facilities. And the wear is showing in spades.

About 50,000 children enter Maryland's juvenile justice system each year, and 2,300 are currently in residential facilities. We're not going to be able to successfully transition these students back to their public schools if, while detained, they are confined to spaces that make even the worst schools look appealing.

➲ Responsibility: Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland General Assembly

[1] *Women Students in Maryland Higher Education: Enrollment, Completion, and Employment Trends*, Maryland Higher Education Commission, March 2005

[2] *2005 State Data Book: Creating a State of Achievement*, Maryland Higher Education Commission, 2005

[3] "Populations Under DPSCS Jurisdiction: Offender Characteristics," Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, June 30, 2005

[4] "Criminal Justice Program," Open Society Institute, © 2005, retrieved at http://www.soros.org/initiatives/baltimore/focus_areas/a_criminal_justice

[5] Eric Lotke and Jason Ziedenberg, *Tipping Point: Maryland's Overuse of Incarceration and the Impact on Public Safety*, Justice Policy Institute, March 2005

[6] ibid

[7] ibid

[8] *The Fact Book, 2004–2005*, Maryland State Department of Education, 2005

[9] "Fiscal Year 2005 Report," The Educational Coordinating Council for Correctional Institutions, October 2005

[10] ibid

[11] Maryland School Performance Report for Correctional Education: 2005," Maryland State Department of Education, 2005

[12] ibid

[13] ibid

[14] *The Fact Book, 2004–2005*, op cit

[15] "Maryland School Performance Report for Correctional Education: 2005," op cit

[16] "Fiscal Year 2005 Report," op cit

[17] "Proposed Budget Enhancement, Fiscal Year 2005," Maryland State Department of Education, 2004

[18] "Maryland Sees Major Jump Since 1980 in Release of Prisoners; Reentry Poses Tough Challenges for Distressed Baltimore Areas; 6 in 10 Released Inmates Return to Baltimore City," The Urban Institute, March 18, 2003

[19] Eric Lotke and Jason Ziedenberg, op cit

[20] Stephen J. Steurer, Linda Smith, and Alice Tracy, *OCE/CEA Three-State Recidivism Study*, Correctional Education Association, September 30, 2001

[21] Audrey Bazos and Jessica Hausman, *Correctional Education as a Crime Control Program*, UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research, March 2004

[22] Stephen J. Steurer, et al, op cit

[a] In 25 years, Maryland's prison population has more than tripled. In 1980, there were 7,731 people in Maryland prisons; in 2005, there were, on average, 24,000 (including pretrial detention, nearly 27,000). African Americans comprise three-quarters of the 1980–2005 prison population growth and about 80% of Maryland's prison population overall.

[b] Cost per pupil ($9,062) includes federal, state, and local funding.

[c] State law requires that inmates entering the system without a high school diploma or GED who have at least 18 months remaining on their sentences be provided educational programming. Federal law requires that all inmates under 22 years old with disabling conditions be provided special education services. About 13,300 inmates met at least one of these eligibility criteria.

[d] Standards Exceeded: Attendance, Occupational Completions, Basic Literacy Completions; Standards Met: High School Completions, GED Passing Rate, Dropout Rate; Standard Not Met: Adult Literacy and Life Skills Completions.

[e] Recruiting and retaining these instructors is another challenge altogether, for they earn far less than their colleagues in the public schools. In the six school districts with the most correctional educator positions, teachers holding a Standard Professional Certificate in the public schools make 11 percent more than their counterparts in correctional institutions; teachers with an Advanced Professional Certificate make 14 percent more; and teachers with a doctorate make 16 percent more. Without parity in educator salaries, correctional institutions will continue to lose their most qualified teachers to the public schools.

[f] Nearly seven in ten will be re-arrested and half will be back in prison

[g] Inmates who participated in educational programs were less likely to be re-arrested (48 percent of program participants vs. 57 percent of non-participants), re-convicted (27 percent vs. 38 percent), and re-incarcerated (21 percent vs. 31 percent).

[h] More than 50,000 children in the state's public schools have an incarcerated parent.

[i] while construction of a new Baltimore County juvenile detention facility is being completed

[j] The transition sequence will be based on analyses and projections in the DJS Facilities Master Plan, online at http://www.djs.state.md.us/publications.html.

School is like they're
preparing us for **prison**,
not **college**.
Middle School Student
Mentoring Male Teens in the Hood

College preparation and financial assistance

Help African-American males make the transition from high school to college.

College enrollment among African-American men is dismal (see "Make college financially viable for African-American males," page 50). So it seems especially unfair that those who defy the college odds find the hurdles not lowered post-admission, but raised.

The K–16 Crack

Not surprisingly, a good number of African-American students who don't take a college-prep curriculum are unprepared for college. A majority (62 percent) need remediation in math, 48 percent need it in reading, and 41 percent need it in English.[1]

But even those African Americans completing a college-prep curriculum may find the name deceiving: 48 percent of those on the path to college have to take a remedial math course once they get there, 35 percent have to take a remedial reading course, and 27 percent have to take a remedial English course. In both math and English, remedial enrollment among African Americans exceeds the all-race average by 20 percent.[2][a]

African-American students end their first year in college with a lower grade-point average than White or Asian students and are less likely to receive a C or better in their first math and English courses.[b] Grades and GPA are even further suppressed among those who don't take a college-prep courseload: One of every three African Americans coming out of a "non-core" high school curriculum will earn a D or F in his first college math class.[3]

Even among African-American students, there's no parity. First-year women—those who took a college-prep courseload <u>and</u> those who didn't—earn sharply higher math and English grades than their male counterparts, and better GPAs.[4]

Remediation doesn't just cost students time and money. It's a morale-sapping endeavor—one that substantially inhibits the likelihood that these students will graduate at all. Only 34 percent of students who take just one remedial reading course complete a two- or four-year degree.[5]

Align high school graduation requirements with the University System of Maryland entrance requirements.

The Stanford University Bridge Project attributes the alarming remediation rate to a formidable division between K–12 and higher education, characterized by a generous array of high school tests that look little like college placement exams, poor K–16 data-gathering and weak governance, virtually no post-secondary accountability, and disconnected K–16 curricula.[6]

> ### Making Amends
>
> In December 2000, USDE's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) signed a five-year partnership to redress Maryland's history of *de jure* segregation and eliminate the vestiges of dual and unequal education at its public colleges.
>
> Specifically, Maryland committed to: 1) increase minority enrollment, retention, and graduation; 2) expand partnerships with K–12 education, including articulation agreements; 3) improve academic and teacher preparation programs and include "cultural competence" in those programs; 4) increase diversity among faculty, staff, and governing/advisory boards; 5) improve campus climate; and 6) strengthen historically Black colleges by increasing operating funds, reinforcing institutional identity, and discouraging program duplication with traditionally White proximal colleges.
>
> While the agreement expired in December 2005, **Maryland's State Plan for Postsecondary Education** calls for MHEC to continue its annual evaluation of the state's performance in meeting these commitments, identify areas that still require attention, and determine how to further the progress that's already been made. ■

Eighty-eight percent of all 8th–graders expect to go to college. Seventy-two percent do within two years of graduating high school. And yet just 47 percent of them take a college-prep courseload.

Betraying the
College Dream
Stanford University
Bridge Project

49

African-American students are especially likely to fall through the secondary/post-secondary breach, as they have less access than other students to college-prep courses and, therefore, less access to good, early college counseling.

The vacuum produces a lot of students with little understanding of college requirements or how well they can expect to do once on campus. Just 9 percent of high school students know what the University of Maryland's curricular entrance requirements are. Just 56 percent of low-income students can name three required courses there. Less than half know about the school's placement-testing policy. And a little more than that have ever talked to their teachers about college.[7][c]

Of course, since surveys show that teachers are even less informed about admissions criteria than their students, the reluctant ones may not be missing out on much. Researchers in Maryland found that school counselors had a near-monopoly on college admission materials, but that students talked to them far less than they talked to teachers.[8][d]

The Math Effect

To some extent, the curricular confusion is unnecessary, as Maryland's graduation requirements are very similar to the University System of Maryland's (USM) entrance requirements[e]—with one important exception. USM requires that graduates applying to any of its campuses take and pass algebra II. High schools don't.[f]

The reason this discrepancy is so important is that the level of math completed in high school has the strongest influence on college completion.[9] Only 8 percent of students taking algebra I as their highest math course—and 23 percent taking geometry—will ever earn a bachelor's degree. The share jumps to 40 percent when algebra II is the highest math course completed.[10] What's more, for African-American and Latino students, high school course rigor is the strongest pre-college predictor of college success.[11]

⮕ **Responsibility:** State Board of Education, working with the K–16 Leadership Council

Develop articulation models in all high schools.

By offering college credit for high school work, articulation helps students make the transition to post-secondary education without duplicating courses. While states adopting articulation models draft their own means—subject eligibility, credit standards and caps—the end is the same: Articulation encourages students to enroll in rigorous courses, gives them an incentive to continue their education beyond high school, and helps them do so more affordably.

Curricular Alignment

In June 2004, the K–16 Workgroup of the Maryland Partnership for Teaching and Learning K–16 released its final report on teacher and administrator quality and curricular alignment. The Standards and Curriculum Alignment Committee recommended several strategies for smoothing the transition between high school and college.

o Make USM admission requirements the default high school program of study.
o Establish in each school system teams of middle and high school teachers and college faculty to discuss what they expect of students completing a college-prep and an advanced curriculum and to align their content and performance expectations accordingly.
o Accept the K–16 math Bridge Goals* to ease the transition between high school math and the first credit-bearing college math course.
o Increase dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities.
o Establish "early college" opportunities.
o Finalize academic program standards and learning outcomes for general-education disciplines. ∎

*The Bridge Goals define the algebra II coursework needed for college success.

But articulation doesn't just help students bridge high school and college. It builds a stronger bridge. It gets high school and college faculty talking to one another about course scope, sequence, standards, and expectations. It gets them sharing strategies, technology, and training. It makes the high school program more relevant and remediation less necessary.

2+2+2

2+2+2 is a different take on articulation. It's less about giving high school students a head-start on college and more about keeping them focused and supported once there. Beginning their junior year in high school (add in the senior year for the first "2"), students enrolling in the program are introduced to their field of interest and given pre-internships. Students then apply to the participating community college and four-year college simultaneously. They complete their first two years of coursework at the community college (the second "2") and their third and fourth at the four-year college (the third "2"). With a tightly structured and aligned curriculum, personalized advising, shared resources, and common faculty expectations, the transition between courses and campuses is smooth—with no gaps, duplication, or surprises to slow progress.

With so many African-American students entering higher education through community colleges, and so few ever completing a degree program,[9] 2+2+2 articulation could well be the lifeline they need.

➲ Responsibility: State Board of Education, working with the K–16 Leadership Council

1 *Student Outcome and Achievement Report: College Performance of New High School Graduates*, Maryland Higher Education Commission, March 2005
2 ibid
3 ibid
4 ibid
5 Andrea Venezia, Michael W. Kirst, and Anthony L. Antonio, *Betraying the College Dream: How Disconnected K-12 and Postsecondary Education Systems Undermine Student Aspirations*, The Stanford Institute for Higher Education Research, March 2003
6 ibid
7 ibid
8 ibid
9 "Research Shows Positive Effects of a Challenging Curriculum," *The Progress of Education Reform, 1999–2001*, Education Commission of the States, August/September 2001
10 Andrea Venezia, Michael W. Kirst, and Anthony L. Antonio, op cit
11 ibid

a The percentages of all students requiring remediation: Math: college prep, 28 percent; non-college prep, 40 percent. Reading: college prep, 15 percent; non-college prep, 21 percent. English: college prep, 14 percent; non-college prep, 22 percent.
b Grade point average: White, 2.8; Asian, 2.8; African American, 2.3.
   Proportion earning a "C" or better in their first course: White: math, 86 percent; English, 92 percent. Asian: math, 81 percent; English, 89 percent. African American: math, 72 percent; English, 85 percent.
c refers to students in non-honors courses
d In Maryland, 61 percent of students talked to a teacher at least once about college requirements; only 53 percent talked to a school counselor.
e The University System of Maryland comprises 11 colleges. What some require, others do not. For instance, while most USM colleges require two years of a foreign language in high school, others let applicants substitute two years of advanced technology. All USM colleges, however, require algebra II.
f Statewide, high schools require that students complete algebra I and geometry, but not algebra II.
g Three percent of African-American students attending a community college will graduate with an associate's degree; 16 percent will transfer to a four-year college. Just one-third of those transferring will graduate with a bachelor's degree within four years of transfer.

Make college financially viable for African-American males.

As bad as the achievement gap is among elementary students, it's one that only widens with age. So it's surprising to see good news in African-American college enrollment. In 10 years, African-American women upped their college enrollment by 55 percent and are alone responsible for nearly half of Maryland's total enrollment growth.[1] The bad news is every year they leave the men further and further behind.

The [Invisible] Man on Campus

Nowhere on the K–16 continuum is the minority gender gap so pronounced. African-American women make up 17 percent of Maryland's college population; African-American men make up just half that.[2][3] And, still, enrollment is no guarantee of completion. Second-year retention and six-year graduation rates at Maryland's four-year public colleges are lowest for African-American students, and lower for men than women.[a] Nationwide, 45 percent of all enrolled Black women will graduate from college, while just 34 percent of Black men will.[4][b]

Also suffering are retention and completion rates in community colleges—the first point of post-secondary entry for half of Maryland's Black college students. Just 16 percent of all African Americans enrolled in a Maryland community college will transfer to a four-year school, and just one-third of them will graduate from that school within four years of transfer.[5][c]

And the picture gets bleaker the higher up the degree ladder you go: In Maryland, African Americans earn 21 percent of all associate degrees, 20 percent of all bachelor's degrees, 15 percent of all master's, and 7 percent of all doctorates.[6]

The Wealth of Nations

There are several compelling reasons for increasing college enrollment and graduation among African Americans. To the students themselves, likely none matters more than earning potential. For every dollar earned by a high school graduate, a college graduate will earn $2, and a master's recipient will earn $2.70.[7][d] In fact, a bachelor's degree nearly erases the salary gap between Blacks and Whites. In 2003, the median income of degreed African Americans was 95 percent of that earned by comparably educated Whites.[8][e]

The second reason also involves economic self-interest—but Maryland's this time. Maryland should soon be the nation's fifth majority-minority state.[f] At the same time, about eight in ten new jobs here will require an education beyond high school.[9] Allowing minority under-education to continue will have major implications for us nationally and internationally. All things remaining constant, we simply won't be able to fill these jobs—and certainly not with people who have learned to work productively and creatively with others of different races, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds, an attribute many business leaders consider key to America's competitiveness in the world economy.

That's why so many of the nation's largest corporations filed briefs supporting the University of Michigan's pro-affirmative action stance during its 2003 court battle. In its *amicus curiae* brief on the heels of *Gratz v. Bollinger*, General Motors wrote, "… the nation's future depends upon leaders trained in diverse academic environments. Indeed, the cross-cultural competence of a business's workforce directly affects its bottom line. Academic institutions offer the best—and for many students, the only—opportunity to acquire these crucial skills."[10]

> For most African-American men, a college education is considered a **dream** or a **luxury**. It is, however, a commodity they can **ill afford to be without**.
> Governor's Commission on Black Males

Unfortunately, college is getting harder and harder to afford. At Maryland's public four-year colleges, tuition for Maryland residents climbed 33 percent from 2000 to 2004.[11] At the University of Maryland, College Park, in-state tuition and fees have jumped 66 percent since FY 2000; this fall, a year at UMCP will cost each in-state undergraduate $8,201.[12][g] That's more than one-quarter of what the average African-American family earns annually.[13][h]

It's little wonder that in 2004, among *A*s and *B*s earned in college preparation, participation, completion, and benefit, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education gave Maryland an *F* in college affordability.[14]

It's in this climate that states and universities are abandoning income-based assistance in favor of merit aid. According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, dramatic increases in tuition coupled with the siphoning of need-based aid resulted in more than a quarter-million qualified students being denied access to college in 2003—a disproportionate number of them, minorities.[15]

Provide full funding for state need-based grant and scholarship programs and extend them to certain incarcerated students.

With affirmative action under attack nationwide, need-based financial assistance has become the *de facto*—if less than perfect—remedy for the inequity in college access that's long plagued this country's minority students.

While race-based aid, when properly applied, is permissible when it furthers "a compelling interest of the state in obtaining educational benefits that derive from a diverse student body,"[16] gun-shy states are increasingly abandoning such aid for grant and scholarship programs using race-neutral criteria. And income fits the bill.[i] States, colleges, and other publicly funded organizations and institutions may make awards of financial aid to disadvantaged students, without regard to race or national origin—even if that means that these awards go disproportionately to minority students.[17]

Unfortunately, income-based aid is drying up quickly. In 2003, the U.S. Department of Education revised the formula for which students qualify for Pell Grants, the primary federal college assistance program that's long been a lifeline for lower income families. The grants are meted out according to families' discretionary income. But after the Department eliminated deductions families were allowed to count toward qualification, the agency shaved $270 million off Pell awards—disqualifying 84,000 students and reducing the amount awarded to an additional 100,000.[18]

Even before the cuts, the Pell program hadn't been keeping pace with tuition. Whereas 10 years ago, a Pell Grant pretty much paid a student's way at a state school, it now rarely covers basic tuition, much less books and board.[19][j]

Maryland must pick up the slack. The state must fully fund its need-based aid and scholarship programs, specifically the Guaranteed Access and Educational Assistance grants, which comprise more than half of all State scholarship funds.[k]

The grants, which have increased 57 percent since FY 2004[20]—do make a difference in college persistence. Among African-American grant recipients enrolled in community colleges, 69 percent returned for a second year or transferred to a four-year college, compared to just 52 percent of non-recipients. Among African-American grant recipients enrolled in four-year colleges, 55 percent were still enrolled or had graduated after four years, versus 49 percent of non-recipients.[21]

➲ Responsibility: Maryland General Assembly, Governor

Promote the availability of federal and state financial aid and scholarship programs to students enrolled in community colleges and in Maryland's Historically Black Institutions.

Community Colleges

Maryland's *F* in college affordability is attributable in large part to community college tuition, 11th highest in the nation and 140 percent of the national average. While community college remains students' lowest priced option, "lowest" is increasingly meaningless. From 1996–2006, community college tuition rose 53 percent in Maryland and now requires 22 percent of an average family's income—after financial aid is allocated. (In 1994, the most expensive states required only 15 percent of a family's income.)[22]

The state's investment in need-based financial aid as compared to the federal investment is 33 percent—an inadequate 10-year, 5-percent increase. Plus, as a proportion, fewer community college students receive need-based aid—and those students receive fewer dollars—than four-year students.[23] Unless we limit tuition increases at community colleges, increase need-based aid there, and intensively promote its availability, many African-American undergraduates—43 percent of whom are enrolled in a community college[24]—will soon find themselves priced out of post-secondary education altogether.

Historically Black Institutions

Of Maryland's 13 degree-granting public colleges and universities, it's the state's four Historically Black Institutions (HBIs) that award nearly half of all the baccalaureates earned by African Americans.[25] And yet these same four colleges have the lowest African-American retention and graduation rates of all four-year public institutions.[26][I]

At nearly half the nation's HBIs surveyed by the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, at least two-thirds of all freshmen ultimately fail to earn a diploma. Study authors attribute the low graduation rate, in part, to family income (typically much lower at HBIs than other colleges); family background (few books in the home, little history of college attendance); and inadequate endowments. Without sufficient endowments, these colleges are unable to offer financial assistance to incoming freshmen and to generate aid packages that keep the upperclassmen in school.[27]

Additionally, many of these families are completely unaware of the financial help that <u>is</u> available to them. In Maryland, just 44 percent of low-income parents said they had received college information, compared to 71 percent of comparatively wealthy parents.[28]

Is the dearth of financial aid information real or perceived? The Maryland Higher Education Commission already distributes to all enrolled students an annually updated guide on applying for USDE–sponsored grants, loans, and work-study. Perhaps the guide needs to be promoted as heavily as the aid.

➲ Responsibility: Maryland Higher Education Commission (Office of Student Financial Assistance)

Convene private organizations to provide tuition assistance to African-American male students, including certain incarcerated students.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act does not prohibit an individual or organization that is not a recipient of federal financial assistance from directly giving scholarships or other forms of financial aid to students based on their race, national origin, or gender.[29]

Problems arise only when the college has a role in the selection of recipients or provides resources for the raising of funds. Therefore, schools may administer minority scholarships funded by private donors if the donors select the recipients directly or if they specify a selection method that gives the school little or no room for subjective judgment, such as requiring the scholarship to be awarded to the most academically talented minority student who demonstrates financial need.[30]

⮕ **Responsibility:** Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Business Roundtable for Education

There is a need for much more vigorous use of economic affirmative action. College admissions officers and the public say that any definition of merit should be tempered by a consideration of obstacles overcome, yet low-income students are hugely underrepresented at selective colleges. Much of the solution simply involves aggressive outreach.

Anthony P. Carnevale & Stephen J. Rose
Socioeconomic Status, Race/Ethnicity, and Selective College Admissions

[1] *Women Students in Maryland Higher Education: Enrollment, Completion, and Employment Trends*, Maryland Higher Education Commission, March 2005

[2] ibid

[3] *2005 Data Book: Creating a State of Achievement*, Maryland Higher Education Commission, 2005

[4] "The Persisting Racial Gap in College Student Graduation Rates," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, Autumn 2004

[5] *2005 Data Book*, op cit

[6] ibid

[7] Neeta Fogg, Paul Harrington, and Thomas Harrington, *The College Majors Handbook, With Real Career Paths and Payoffs*, Jist Publishing, 2004

[8] "Holding a Four-Year College Degree Brings Blacks Close to Economic Parity With Whites," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, Spring 2005

[9] "Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future: A Task Force on Public Education for the 21st Century," Center for American Progress, April 2004

[10] "Brief of General Motors Corporation as *amicus curiae* in support of defendants, Jennifer Gratz, et al, plaintiffs, v. Lee Bollinger, et al, defendants," Civil Action No. 97-75231, July 17, 2000

[11] *2005 Data Book*, op cit

[12] Schedule of Tuition and Mandatory Fees: Fiscal 2007, University System of Maryland, retrieved at http://www.usmd.edu/Leadership/USMOffice/AdminFinance/budget/umcp07.html

[13] Carmen DeNavis-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Robert J. Mills, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2004*, U.S. Census Bureau, August 2005

[14] *Measuring Up 2004*, Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, September 2005

[15] *Responding to the Crisis in Higher Education*, National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, January 2004

[16] FinAid, Affirmative Action and Financial Aid, 2005, retrieved at www.finaid.org/educators/affirmativeaction.phtml

[17] ibid

[18] Matthew Grimm, "School Daze: African-American Education," *American Demographics*, February 1, 2004

[19] Jacqueline E. King, *2003 Status Report on the Pell Grant Program*, American Council on Education, October 2003

[20] "Maryland Community College Affordability and Funding," Department of Legislative Services, November 2, 2005

[21] "A Comparison of the Retention, Transfer, and Graduation Rates of Need-Based Financial Aid Recipients at Maryland Public Colleges and Universities with the Performance of Non-Recipients," Maryland Higher Education Commission, February 2004

[22] "Maryland Community College Affordability and Funding," op cit

[23] ibid

[24] *2005 Data Book*, op cit

[25] "Trends in Degrees and Certificates by Race and Gender, Maryland Higher Education Institutions," Maryland Higher Education Commission, March 2005

[26] "Retention and Graduation Rates at Maryland Public Four-Year Institutions," Maryland Higher Education Commission, May 2005

[27] "The Persisting Racial Gap in College Student Graduation Rates," op cit

[28] Michael W. Kirst and Andrea Venezia, "Undermining Student Aspirations: The Frayed Connections Between K–12 and Postsecondary Education Set Students Up for Failure," National CrossTalk, Spring 2003

[29] FinAid, op cit

[30] ibid

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[a] In <u>Maryland</u>, African-American students' 74-percent two-year retention rate trails the all-race average by 7 percent; their 46-percent six-year graduation rate trails the all-race average by 17 percent. The six-year graduation rate for women entering college in 1998 was 66 percent; for men, it was 57 percent.
<u>Nationwide</u>, 40 percent of African-American students will graduate (MD: 46 percent), versus 61 percent of White students (MD: 68 percent)—so while our graduation rates are significantly higher than the national average, the discrepancy between races is comparable.

[b] From 1990 to 2003, the nation's Black men improved their college completion rate from 28 to 34 percent, a 6-percentage-point gain. Black women nearly doubled that gain, improving their completion rate from 34 to 45 percent.

[c] Among all students, 24 percent will transfer to a four-year college, and 46 percent of them will graduate within four years of the transfer.

[d] Majors matter: In 2003, African Americans accounted for just 2 percent of PhDs awarded in the physical, biological, and information sciences, and in engineering. Nationwide, just 19 African Americans earned a PhD in math.

[e] In 2003, African Americans with a bachelor's degree earned, on average, $36,694—95 percent of Whites' $38,667 and double that of African-American high school graduates ($18,396). However, the parity comes less from African-American men—whose $41,916 annual salary is only 82 percent of that of comparably educated White men—than degree-holding African-American women, whose income averages 110 percent of White women's.

[f] joining California, Texas, New Mexico, and Hawaii

[g] … not including room and board. On-campus housing and meals more than double the annual tuition cost.

[h] In 2004, the median income for Black households was $30,134—62 percent of the median for non-Hispanic White households ($48,977).

[i] When all reported incomes are adjusted for family size, 41 percent of Hispanics, 33 percent of African Americans, and 14 percent of non-Hispanic Whites are living in families with resources below the "minimum but adequate" level, as defined by the U.S. Department of Labor.

[j] At a public two-year college, the maximum Pell Grant will cover 68 percent of tuition, fees, and room and board; at a four-year college, it will cover 41 percent.

[k] The <u>Guaranteed Access Grant</u> (GAG) covers a student's need up to 100 percent of full-time undergraduate expenses. The <u>Educational Assistance Grant</u> (EAG) covers a student's need up to 35 percent of full-time undergraduate expenses.

[l] <u>Two-year retention rates</u>: Bowie, 74.0 percent; Coppin, 66.1 percent; UMES, 67.4 percent; Morgan, 71.2 percent; All-institution average: 74.1 percent. <u>Six-year graduation rates</u>: Bowie, 42.9 percent; Coppin, 26.6 percent; UMES, 49.7 percent; Morgan, 41.5 percent; All-institution average: 45.6 percent.

Provide a support system for African-American males in college.

About one student in five who attends a four-year college will leave without completing his degree.[1] But academic under-preparedness is only one reason why. Nonacademic factors are often just as powerful. Students who are less confident upon entering college are more likely to drop out. Students who have little contact with faculty are more likely to drop out. And most persuasively, students who feel marginalized are more likely to drop out.[2]

> Social integration has a more influential role in predicting student persistence than does academic integration.
>
> **Social support** appears to be a major determinant of both **success** and **satisfaction**.
>
> Tamara L. Brown
> *"Gender Differences in African-American Students' Satisfaction with College"*

Many minority students feel this marginalization palpably. They feel disaffected and disconnected from the majority college population. They feel the institutional climate is unresponsive to their needs, experiences, and expectations. And they feel it not just through overt hostility or exclusion, but, rather, through simple acts of passive invisibility or ignorance.[3]

The effects of this marginalization are significant. African-American men make up just 8.5 percent of Maryland's undergraduate population,[4] and nearly two-thirds of them won't graduate.[5]

Conducting a meta-analysis of 300 research studies, the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that diversity initiatives not only increase access, retention, and success among traditionally underrepresented students, they actually improve all students' level of satisfaction and interaction with their institutions and positively influence their academic growth.

Curricular diversity; involvement in specialized student organizations (support centers, housing, academic departments); formalized, institutionally supported inter-group contact; and a perceived university-wide commitment to diversity (substantiated in increased minority recruitment and retention) predict greater cohesion, satisfaction, and retention among all students—minority and majority alike. In fact, for African-American males, this kind of university-based instrumental support appears to be the *primary* determinant of college satisfaction.[6]

Of course, by the very nature of marginality, the most disaffected students are the least likely to use the campus services that could reduce their dropout risk.

But marginality explains only so much. For the fact is two- and six-year retention rates at Maryland's Historically Black Institutions (HBIs) are the lowest among all four-year public colleges.[7] We need to ensure parity in funding and academic rigor—for resource and program gaps could explain, at least in part, retention problems where social isolation is less likely the cause.

The retention problem hasn't gone unnoticed in Maryland. For more than five years, the Governor and General Assembly have supported the Access and Success Grant Initiative, which provides funding to Maryland's four public HBIs earmarked for retention activities. In addition, every three years, Maryland's colleges and universities report on their activities to attract and retain more African-American students.

Among community colleges, retention activities include hiring more minority faculty; expanding tutoring, counseling, advising, and mentoring services; training faculty in diversity issues; reorganizing and improving remedial course delivery; improving the academic monitoring of at-risk students; strengthening relationships with HBIs; and developing first-year programs for minority students.[8]

Among four-year colleges, activities include establishing articulation programs with community colleges; improving faculty-student interaction and intervention; reducing freshman-class size; expanding minority-targeted advising, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring services; conducting

student satisfaction surveys; improving campus climate; increasing institutional need-based aid; and promoting full-time undergraduate enrollment.[9]

But with nearly all public institutions failing on at least one minority-achievement measure[10] [a]— despite these varied efforts—it's clear there's much more work to be done. Looking at programs that provide needed social and emotional support for African-American males—in addition to those promoting their academic success—seems a promising place to start.

➲ Responsibility: *Maryland Institutions of Higher Education, Maryland Higher Education Commission*

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[2] ibid

[3] Debra Humphreys, *Diversity Works: The Emerging Picture of How Students Benefit*, Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1998

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[5] "The Persisting Racial Gap in College Student Graduation Rates," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, Summer 2005

[6] Tamara L. Brown, "Gender Difference in African-American Students' Satisfaction with College," *Journal of College Student Development*, September/October 2000

[7] "Retention and Graduation Rates at Maryland Public Four-Year Institutions," Maryland Higher Education Commission, May 2005

[8] "2003 Minority Achievement Action Plans: Maryland Public Colleges and Universities," Maryland Higher Education Commission, October 2003

[9] ibid

[10] ibid

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[a] Measures are established by the Maryland Higher Education Commission. <u>Community Colleges</u>: 1) Minority student enrollment as a percent of service-area population; 2) Percent minority of full-time faculty; 3) Percent minority of full-time administrative/professional staff; 4) Transfer/graduation rates of minority students. <u>Public Four-Year Colleges and Universities</u>: 1) Recruit and retain a growing number of under-represented minority undergraduates and prepare them for success; 2) Increase retention and graduation rates of under-represented minority undergraduates.